University of Alberta

Teaching Outside the School:
A Phenomenological Inquiry

by

Andrew Foran ©

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Abstract

This study explores what can be learned from teachers engaged with secondary students in an outside-learning context. Seven teachers share their lived experiences of opening their instructional methods to include experiences that extend beyond the classroom. However, the focus is not on the subject material outdoors, but on the teachers' pedagogical experiences with children in outside sites of learning as a part of school.

Using a phenomenological methodology, two sets of interviews reveal the lived experiences of the teachers engaged pedagogically outside the school. The focus of each interview is to address a taken-for-granted meaning of a lived experience: the act of teaching outdoors. The educators in this study conduct outdoor lessons that cover a range of academic disciplines and school-based programs. Central to this thesis is the conscious exploration of outside teaching by asking the question: What is the pedagogical experience of teaching outside the school? I utilized a qualitative approach to conduct open-ended phenomenological-hermeneutic conversations, and I then created a framework for the written anecdotes—crafted stories that each captured a unique moment of teaching outdoors. As part of a phenomenological investigation, each anecdote aims to discover the essence of the experience by presenting how these teachers were connected to the pedagogical moment when they left the inside-classroom to go outdoors.

The intention of the anecdotes is to bring experience vividly into presence and thereby make it immediately and unreflectively recognizable to other teachers. I aim to *show* the reader by means of evoking the wonder of teaching outside. The anecdotes

indicate the act of teaching undergoes a delicate shift, a change that is elusive but that does inevitably occur once teachers step outside the classroom with students.

The shifts are categorical as occurring in themes of freedom, intensity, realism, relationships, and adventure. The findings indicate that moving education outside challenges conventional practice, in part because the pedagogical and instructional language educators currently have at our disposal captures little of the experience of outside education. The following chapters seek to capture and articulate the outside experience and show the relational connections to students shared by each teacher participant.

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Thank you Max. You, and pedagogy, are the reasons I journeyed west.

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Dedication

To Janice, Alec, and Zachary for being with me outdoors sharing in treasured moments.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"Where are you going?" "Out." "Where?" "Just out." "What are you going to do?" "I don't know. I'm just going out." For children, going out may be the opening of the real or imaginary world of adventure, exploration, discovery, games, and play; or it may be merely *puttering about* in boredom. Adults sometimes tell children to go outside as a means to rid the indoor world of child-like commotion. How do adults regard themselves with the outside? Do adults only see constructive purposes that somehow have left the world of childhood play behind? In growing up, I seem to have left behind some sense of relation to the outside world. As an adult leaving the indoors, I am usually engaged in an outside purpose: daily exercise, chores around the yard, or as a traveller using the outside only temporarily, until I arrive at my destination. The outside becomes something many of us merely pass through.

School life for children seems to be drawing a strong divide between outside and inside. It seems that we have forgotten that the outdoors too can be inhabited as a classroom—a natural classroom. Children pass through the outdoors only briefly as they go to and from school. And yet, the outdoors carries many potential learning opportunities. In this thesis, I explore the educational potential of the outside world by focusing on the pedagogical significance of relations between teachers, their students, and the out-of-doors. While the inside experience is the dominant mode of learning for children in many Canadian schools, there are teachers, programs, and courses that embrace outdoor learning experiences.

Going Outside

When I close the door behind me, as an adult, I walk with demeanor to my destination. Children rarely seem to just walk. Children burst into the outside world. The child's entrance into the outdoor world is typically accompanied by speed, noise, and smiles. We see this scene depicted in the movie *Small Change*, by Truffaut (1976). The school door flies open, seconds after the ringing of the final bell, and we see and hear the noise of rushing children to get out. In a magical blur, the world is full of children pouring into the open space. It is a moment that defies belief, for more children per second can navigate the narrow streets of the old French village than would seem physically possible. Within seconds the streets are emptied and the school is silent. It is as if the outside has unconditionally accepted the presence of children and has made room for their infinite energy.

Small Change effectively entices adult viewers to remember what it is like to be a child in the closing weeks of the school year. Truffaut (1976) does a marvelous job catching their spontaneity in the classroom, during recess, on the street, and at home. He provides vignettes of the children from the provincial town of Thiers, in France, but it is the scenes of children in the episodes outside the containment of school, at day's beginning and end, when viewers see just how enthusiastic children can become. After viewing *Small Change*, I recall memories of my own childhood and the desire for the freedom that I experienced outside the school. I could see myself in the children of *Small*

Change as they leave their school or move through the streets of their small town, they are in constant motion, a mass of bodies in uncontrollable flux. The outside world fuels their laughter, their screams—their legs pumping faster then the pistons of an engine, and arms swaying, waving, and flapping with passion and enthusiasm; one could swear they are about to lift off in flight.

Adults do not leave buildings in this manner. Do adults ever go out like children: free, full of energy, and without a clearly defined purpose? As we get older, I wonder sometimes whether the outside becomes a world that is foreign to us. Would it be possible for grown-ups to regain a sense of *being outside*? Yet for many adults there is still a pull, a call, and for some there is a dominance that the outside seems to have over their consciousness. Many of us, adults or children, need the outdoors to make sense of our lives. This understanding presents itself in simple life lessons. Eating outside has a way of making food taste just a bit better—same food, richer taste. Inside school, daydreaming would be unacceptable, but moments of reflective drifting outdoors are encouraged. I can learn so much about who I am outside. I can stare at the seashore, a horizon of nothingness, for hours, but if I were to spend that same time staring at walls inside, I would become restless and bored. Being outside, there is a connection to nature, a stirring of who I am in this world.

Teaching Outside: Background to the Study

From my earliest days as a teacher, I have been drawn to the world that waits for me beyond the doorway. Staring out a window may be my attempt to evoke the lost wonder of childhood memories of the outdoors. I believe it was the lure of the outside that made it possible for me to work with juvenile offenders, addicted youth, and youth expelled from school, as a beginning teacher with the federal government's Stay-in-School initiative. It soon occurred to me that engaging these young people indoors, ironically, kept them outside my pedagogical reach. But once I took them outside, physically out-of-the-school, I was able *to keep them in school*. These outside experiences provided insight into the importance of the relationship between the teacher and the student. Pedagogical awareness for the outside as a place for teaching prompted me to develop a credit course, in 1995, that was based in the outdoors: Adventure Based Experiential Learning (ABEL). ABEL was a senior high outdoor-education course that brought students outdoors and allowed them to experience the natural world.

Practicing Outdoors

My instructional aim was always to connect an outdoor practice to other subject areas of the curriculum—something beyond the concept of traditional outdoor education: woods travel, kayaking, canoeing, or climbing. Another aim was to share the value-added experience that was possible for children in learning sites outside the classroom. Thus began a number of inservice days introducing teachers to the natural and significant relational benefits that can result when teaching outside. During these professional-development days, outside the walls of school, subtle realities began to present themselves. Teachers—whether rookies or veterans—revealed that teaching outside is not a simple act. Beneath the surface of their questions and comments were deeper aspects and dimensions of their perceptions that lent validation to the sheer complexity of teaching outside the classroom. Many of these teachers, who remained associated with me after the inservice days, acknowledged something unique, even exceptional, when they were teaching outside their classrooms. The shared teacher stories of outside teaching experiences contained descriptions that used the words *adventurous*, *exciting*, *intimidating*, *challenging*, *isolating*, *liberating*, or *fulfilling* as descriptors that I believed to be a pedagogical in description. As they tried to articulate specific moments outside the school, I realized these teachers were only capturing particular elements of the outside experience. In our ongoing discussions, we struggled to find a language to express our emerging outside pedagogy.

I am then curious when I ask: "What are the implications, pedagogically, of conducting lessons outside?" My very teaching practice is rooted in this question; implicit in any possible answers is the importance of what can be learned from this study. These outside lessons may foster educational experiences that reach farther than classroom walls by informing educators about another way to teach children. Teaching outside is an educational strategy that requires and deserves attention to fully understand its potential and limits as they are discovered within the real experiences of teachers in an outside classroom.

Dwelling Between Inside and Outside Education

In exploring teachers' lived experiences, in this study, I reveal facets of pedagogical experiences inherent in teaching outside the school; many external encounters are taken into account. My thesis consistently juxtaposes the location of teaching outside the school with a more accepted view of being in the classroom. The importance of this contrasting, and eventual comparison, lies in the notion that when educators discuss taking a class outside, they often make reference to their outside classroom; however, there is no *room* in this outside space. The significant element here is the absence of language to express a practice that is conducted outside. Therefore, I am attuned to emerging similarities between the inside and outside worlds. The goal is to discover the uniqueness of an outdoor-teaching encounter as teachers engage children outdoors. My inquiry includes intensive-away trips (multi-day), field trips (single day), and community-based education programs (part of a service learning component), as well as single lessons or units, all of which focus on the curricular outcomes of various subjects as a way for teaching outside the school.

How, then, does the pedagogical experience change when classes leave an institution of learning? Formulating this question immediately points me to many possible influences. A community-based lesson is experienced not only by the students, but also by members of the community, and thus opens the practices of teachers to outside scrutiny. The classroom is a private world, but what happens outside—educationally—is now a more public matter. Therefore, an instructor who leaves the school becomes, in a sense, a stranger subjected to an outside gaze within the wider community. Other teachers within the school may now view an outside-educational practice with suspicion because such a teacher has left the "gaze" (see Foucault, 1979, p. 171) of the school. An educational practice that leaves the establishment is also open to unlimited threats and risks directed against the very children one teaches. Strategies to handle these immanent threats may very well be absent from the current forms of preparation and professional development that teachers avail themselves of. And an outside lesson maybe experienced as a heightened moment exceeding what is typically expected as a part of learning the curriculum; are teachers prepared to assist students to process these intense moments?

Another constant concern among my inserviced teachers is the focus on the *abundance of space* issue in outdoor education—a kind of pedagogical agoraphobia. This concern is summarized in the following observation: "too much space! I felt disconnected from the students." Again, outside teaching occurs with a class of students, in a non-room, within an abundance of space. This becomes one of the challenges for teachers: to leave behind what is known, to venture into the unfamiliar, to hone a pedagogical practice that exists outside the norm of their established, preservice training. To leave the classroom is to venture outside the bounds of what many teachers *know* to be familiar and consider inviolable about teaching.

Research Question

My practice has bridged these inside–outside worlds, allowing me to come and go, experiencing what both worlds have to offer pedagogically. During the *teaching moment* outside the school, I would flood myself with numerous questions: What are they learning? Are these experiences outside school beneficial to their development? Why was this lesson so different? These are just of few examples of the questions that would constantly surface as I led class after class outdoors. My experiences in the outdoors with youth challenged my conceptions of a proper education. Furthermore, I came to question the very experience of teaching outside in terms of what it offered me. What I have derived personally from this study is greater clarification about what the outside teaching experience has to offer children and teachers. I immersed myself within a phenomenological inquiry that could illuminate the pedagogical necessity in outside teaching. By orienting my inquiry phenomenologically, I address the following question: What is the pedagogical significance for teachers in educative experiences *outside* the school? Thus based on the lived experiences of teachers, what distinctive pedagogical meanings are generated in the teaching moment with children *outside* the school?

It may be prudent at this point to provide clarification of the main terms within my research question. By pedagogical significance I am referring to the importance of the relationship between teachers and students. Pedagogy has become a difficult term to use in an educational discussion due to the broad range of meanings that are now attached educationally. I am not discussing pedagogy as a science or technical craft, nor as an art in teaching. My emphasis, instead, is on how a teacher "sees" (as explained by van Manen, 2002c, p. 23) children during the teaching experience. In this study, the *seeing* takes place in an outside location. Therefore, the importance of being *outside the school* takes on a distinct meaning for my research question. Outside the school refers to any lesson, unit, field trip, project, extra-curricular activity, or moment of instruction that is connected to curriculum, but transpires outside the school. I do not want to limit my study to the traditional notions of outdoor education. Yet I want to be open to as many possible educational experiences as have been conducted in an outside venue. For the outside teaching experiences included in this study, school children were a part of the experience, and the outside area was physically removed from the established school building. As well, a teacher was present and responsible for the class, the material being taught, and deliberately chose to hold class outside.

Phenomenological Focus of the Research

The phenomenological focus is on the teaching experience for teachers. My purpose is to enter into the lifeworld of outside educators and to begin a corpus of research that may contribute to existing educational practices. I want to explore the uniqueness of this teaching experience. At times, discussions regarding students have entered into my thesis, but I concentrate on the lived experience, the concrete moment, of the teacher engaging children in learning outside the school. The purpose of this specification is to avoid the theories, strategies, and debates that confront teachers daily.

To address the main research question, "What is the pedagogical significance for teachers in educative experiences *outside* the school?" I enumerate here the following subsumed questions, which are addressed in the chapters of my thesis:

- What do teachers experience in the relational aspect of pedagogy outside the sanctity of the classroom, and how does this differ from the inside-school experience of pedagogy?
- How do teachers experience associating themselves with the outside world?
- How do teachers experience themselves mediating the inner worlds of students and the outer worlds of society?
- How is the (un)boundedness of space experienced when pedagogy is brought into consideration?
- How is class time experienced in an outside place versus the inside of the classroom?

The significance of this study rests on the notion that little of teacher education programming in Canada, if any of the requisite instructional exposure, considers the full potential and implications of conducting learning experiences with children outside the school. The challenge to contextualize outdoor pedagogy within the current school structure is revealed by my first sub-question. These sub-questions have guided my study so that I can learn from teachers already engaged with students in an outside classroom. Curriculum documents (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2003; Alberta Learning, 2003; Nova Scotia Department of Education and Culture, 2002) take a challenging stance by making instructional statements that direct teachers to prepare students to be active, responsible, contributing members of society by opening the classroom to a wide range of supporting methods that extend beyond the convention of classroom practices. However, teachers may not be prepared pedagogically to undertake such a challenge. The potential lies in changing the notion of classroom place that can both compromise learning and enhance the educational experience of young people. Teaching outside is more than just covering a given subject outdoors; educators need to develop a pedagogical language and understanding of outside-learning experiences. My research question, along with the supporting questions, enabled me to probe the lived experience of teaching outside the school. To best show what this phenomena is, as a recognized experience, phenomenology offers the field of educational research an opportunity to identify and attach meaningful language to an experience that has heretofore remained inarticulate.

As teachers we can experience an "engaged pedagogy [that] emphasizes … that teachers are actively engaged in a process of self-actualization" (Warren, 1998, p. 135) by teaching outside the classroom. Findings from this research may help articulate and concretize pedagogical dimensions with respect to the practices of hands-on-learning, a more experiential practice for classroom-instructional reform outside the school setting.

My methodology aims to make connections with a "practical pedagogical orientation" (see van Manen, 1988, p. 411) to outdoor education. The need to document the impact of a simple lesson in the outdoors is crucial to the development of this experiential-educational field. Shumer (2000) reminds curriculum developers and practitioners, "we need data and analysis that focuses on the details of the people and the process" (p. 79). It is the teacher in the process—outside the school, as school place—that is central to this thesis.

A Place Called School

Mere mention of the word *school* is enough to launch nostalgic conversations among adults. As the sharing of stories envelops the listeners, many are taken back into memories of the spaces they occupied as learners. This place called school means many different things for the tellers and listeners within the reflective moments of being a student. The spectrum of words used to describe school experiences is vast, rich, and fraught with personal meaning. The uttered descriptors soon shape distinct places in the minds of those conversing. School stories tend to be associated with certain teachers, particular classrooms, personal hideouts, specific fields, parking lots, and even the patches of woods where one used to play during recess. The stories may include the head office, the gym, or the stage where pre-adulthood was played out. These places create spaces in our individual memories that each of us calls school life.

School as Place

As a teacher I have spent much of my reflective time standing in my hallway, staring back into my classroom or quietly walking going from space-to-space. Just how many times have students walked the hallways of our school? Hallways are the places where many school members congregate daily as a scheduled event. On the one hand, hallways seem to be the forgettable places of school life: they are just a means to an end, a way to get from one place to another, a space one passes through. From an architectural standpoint, hallways are merely a functional necessity. On the other hand, the memories of hallways contain countless pedagogically significant experiences. And it is these pathways that lead teachers and their students into or out of the school.

These long, narrow rooms (see Figure 1) may indeed be the last things learners remember, but they are the first places we see upon entering a school. For example, the atmosphere of the hallway speaks meaningfully to fist-time visitors, for it is here that they are embraced by ethereal illusions that inhabit their memories and become that place called school. Once visitors cross the threshold, they become a part of the interconnected feelings associated with that particular place. As strangers or residents walk the hallways they are reminded of their own

Figure 1: Typical school hallway. Hallway space comprises an integral amount of overall school space. Photograph by A. Foran.

schooling. This is the power of the hallway, the lure of that formative space that surpasses the strict functionality of access, an entrance from or exit to the outside world. By walking the hallway, one is swept into the arterial flow, the rhythm and pulse of the place. Each step takes one deeper into the heart of the school, and with each echo of the treading foot one can sense the spirit of place. It is within the hallway that the atmosphere of the place, the school, can be felt, even before entering the classrooms. But what is to be said of teaching, learning, and the pedagogical relationship that is outside, severed from the pulse and unique atmosphere of the school? Like the hallway, the space outside the school is nothing but an empty void, and a space that may not be considered suitable for instructional endeavors. What happens for the teacher when learning and teaching occur outside the sanctity of the classroom?

The Space Outside School

Teaching is a challenging profession, and I question whether teachers are pedagogically prepared to undertake the challenge of taking students outside the school setting. Perhaps it is experience gained from trial and error that grants the teacher confidence to step outside the classroom and teach. Do teachers, experienced or not, become lost in the unlimited space that opens before them and the students, or is space limited when pedagogy is brought into consideration? Outside, the classroom teacher may be unsure of how to teach due to uncertainty about how to use the space. This uncertainty may also envelop the students. This change of environment could compromise learning. The abundance of space might foil the art of teaching. However, an outside-pedagogical experience may also serve to enhance learning and the student–teacher relationship.

Everyone has spent portions of their lives outdoors, and, in light of this shared experience, one would expect teaching outside to be a natural act. A sound outside teaching practice should do more than simply cover given material outdoors: as teachers, we need to develop a language and practice to include outside teaching experiences.

What constitutes a classroom? Can a classroom be any place or space in which learning occurs? To answer this question of what a classroom is, particularly as a specific environment for learning, I want to consider the existing pedagogical relationships that occur within school as a basis for comparison. To question the sanctity of the classroom environment is to compare teaching outside to teaching inside. It is to look for the differences and similarities. Such questioning immediately raises simple and complex classroom realities. Every school has a feel, or a quality that is sensed by residents and visitors. Many call this the atmosphere of the school. Can you have a classroom atmosphere when you have no classroom? Can the outdoor classroom lend to a pedagogical atmosphere? If a stranger can feel something within the hallway of a school, can students and a teacher create an educational atmosphere outside of school? Could an outsider also feel this atmosphere? Van Manen (2002c) is clear when he states, "every home, every classroom, every school contains a certain atmosphere. The question is not whether there should be a pervasive atmosphere in the school, but rather what kind of atmosphere is proper for it, worthy of it" (p. 68). Does this extend to the space outside the school?

Distinctions of Place and Space

An important distinction for this study to establish is that between *space* and *place*. I seem to use the terms interchangeably and, because of this, I suspect both are understood to mean one and the same by others as well. Tuan (1977) makes the following distinction: "In experience, the meaning of space often merges with that of place ...What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value" (p. 6). I believe this also holds true for the outdoor classroom: The more familiar students are in an environment, the more comfort is achieved and attachment is made. With repeated visits to an outside space, the area becomes *place* due to the relationships invested in the area. The distinction is paramount because "places ... are constructed in our memories and affections through repeated encounters and complex associations. Place experiences are necessarily time-deepened and memory qualified" (Relph, 1993, p. 26). Teaching outside, even if the practice is limited to a one-time lesson, has been described by teachers as special, unique, intense, intimate, and powerful—a memorable moment. It seems, then, that contact with the outside in a particular space—through teaching—need not be a repeated encounter for space to be transformed into a pedagogical place.

What does being-outside-of-a-school—in the space that we stare at through classroom windows—mean for teaching? This concern is important because a school is not unlike our understanding of other buildings. We must realize the school "arouses feelings alongside the associations" (Markus, 1993, p. 3). As previously noted, the mere mention of school immediately evokes meanings, memories, and stories about particular place experiences. I sense is it possible to engender similar feelings by conducting lessons outside the conventional, designated teaching space. What pedagogical implications are engendered when teachers abandon the accepted act of teaching indoors, and what happens to the relational associations of learning attached to the classroom in the physical sense? Does the decision to go outside to teach reshape the curriculum-as-planned and alter the curriculum-as-lived? With respect to place, "the people living in it" engage in the act of arranging to effect the "shaping of living space to their purposes … [—] … 'arranging'. 'Human living-space is just … a purposeful arrangement of places and positions to which the things around them belong'" (Bollnow, 1961, pp. 36–37). However, when teaching outside, the notion of belonging encroaches on my confidence and affects my pedagogy. The difficulty of belonging to the outside erodes my sense of place as I shape educational experiences outdoors; with children I always feel a pull, a call to return to my school.

The Dominance of Place in Pedagogical Understanding

In 15 years of teaching outdoors, I have discovered the purpose of supporting material used in outdoor education to facilitate student outcomes. There are an abundance of rubrics for physical education outdoors, innovative environmental lessons, and unique, one-time outdoor learning programs related (directly or indirectly) to public-education curriculum. The manifest gap in teacher preparation is the lack of documentation that chronicles the experiences of teachers outside school. The focus of teacher education tends to be the experience inside the school. Schools, like other buildings, "are spatially about social knowledge—that is taken-for-granted-knowledge … Social knowledge is about the unconscious organizing principles for the description of society. Often a building is a concretization of these principles" (Hillier & Hanson, 1984, p. 183). Markus (1993) takes this notion further when he states a place "can be designed for discovery of both self and others" (p. 25). I encourage this to be more a pedagogical discovery as experiences in "social knowledge," paired with curricular learning, in outside spaces.

My experience of teaching in outside spaces leads me to believe it can become a place for educational endeavors. People's connections to place are the relational understandings of their personal associations to a *physical place* and to *one another*. For this study, the relational is a metaphorical place, no different than the school building that typically shelters the relational connection between teachers and students. These associations vary, for they "need not be strong and positive; sometimes there may be strong affection (topophilia) for places, but this may be paralleled by an aversion (topophobia) for other places" (Relph, 1993, p. 21). Relph notes the following:

> Belonging to a place, feeling part of it, gives many a positive sensation of security. Yet for others it may be oppressive and restrictive. Whether we know places with deep affection or merely as stopping points in our passage through the world, they are set apart in time and space because they have distinctive meanings for us. (p. 28)

However, acknowledging topophilia or topophobia does not explain or illustrate what a teacher experiences pedagogically when he or she teaches outside. This connection to place is of great importance to how a teacher is able to foster the relational capacity. If the outdoors remains no more than space, then belonging—positive sensations, affections, and distinctive meanings—may not be experienced by teacher or students when teaching outdoors. Does this confirm the critical significance of the school building as a place in teaching processes conducive of an appropriate classroom environment?

Is teaching outside an abandonment of the school-building's purpose because one deliberately seeks other grounds to *teach differently*? Is this to suggest that it is impossible to achieve in the outdoor classroom what is inherent within the indoor classroom, for as teachers we "regard buildings as material classifying devices; they organize people, things, and ideas in space so as to make conceptual systems concrete" (Markus, 1993, p. 19). A building is a space shared with others and we do not doubt its tangibility as a place. By not utilizing the building-space of the classroom, the outdoor educator may miss the experience in the "theatre of human activity" associated only with buildings; Frankl (1914) writes that an empty building "becomes a 'mummy' for 'people are a part of architecture'" (p. 159). A building implies and holds power; it has "form, function and space [and] each has meanings in the field of social relations, each is capable of signifying who we are, to ourselves, in society and in the cosmic scheme of things" (Markus, p. 30). One challenge confronted by the outside educator is to maintain the importance and structure of social relations as an organizing power that equals that of the school building.

An Educational Context

Teaching ABEL provided me with numerous realizations about teaching outside the school. It was within the school that I struggled with the pedagogical intent of my efforts to lead students outside. I still question the depth and scope of the learning that occurred outside, but not in question was the significance of the relationship I had with these young people. My assessment of learning inside the school was constantly challenged by a need for another venue, a learning place that would make the curriculum experience more real. Dwelling, as a teacher, in this area of tension pushed me to blend the inside teaching experience—the established subject areas of geography and English—with elements of the outdoors as an instructional strategy. The blending was my attempt to achieve what was best from both worlds within my lesson plans. However, by bridging the inside (how I was taught to teach) and outside (where I lead children in order to teach), I encountered a dearth of supporting materials to guide my educational practice. Absent from the educational literature was an outside pedagogy for senior high. Compounding this deficit were sparse depictions of teachers being with children in outside places. What was available was an abundance of experiential-educational theories, theories of learning rooted in Dewey (1938), and studies that captured the array of student experiences or experiential-program designs.

It is predictable that educational theory is layered with complexities, possible meanings, interpretations, perceptions, and abundant interpretations of experience. Berv (1998) tries to simplify the practice from theory by stating: "experiential education is nothing more or less than sound pedagogy intended to maximize the learning and growth of all participants" (p. 122). The common ground between the philosophy of education and classroom practice is the struggle to achieve praxis (Aoki, 1984; Eisner, 1985; Huebner, 1975b).

What is the common ground between experience-based learning inside the school and academic learning outside the school? I struggle to create a shared place for both within my current educational setting. Within the tension that binds these two modes of teaching, I must question whether one approach can complement the other. The source of this tension lies in determining if genuine, outside experiences enhance learning when combined with academics. Further problematizing this query is my need to understand the outside teaching experience from the teacher's perspective. The reality of modern classrooms is that very little of education and the learning process is gathered through direct experience. Lindsay and Ewert (1999) assert the following:

> Teaching in … schools focuse[s] on the facts as found in the textbooks and not … [on] applying knowledge … [;]textbooks are regarded as an efficient means of communicating information to students but, in reality, deny or restrict responsibility for learning as well as opportunities for active involvement in the learning process (p. 16).

In short, Lindsay and Ewert establish that it is the thoughts of teachers, based on their experiences, that become the basis for the majority of curricular content in modern public-school education. Teaching outside the classroom may very well be my attempt to bring students into closer contact with direct experience and thereby achieve a sound experiential pedagogy. This contact would be contrary to the more dominant mediums of education delivery.

Current approaches to education seem to lack outside involvement as a teaching strategy. Van Manen (1999) indicates that educational policies, discourses, and programs are guided by specific agendas: corporatist (business), managerialist (leadership), productionist (industrial), consumerist (market), cognitivist (psychological), technicist (science and technology), aestheticist (fine arts), criticist (polemical cause), postmodernist (discourse), civil-citizen (democracy), and ethicist (moral). These current approaches vary in orientation to and expectations of student progress. All promote a well-defined basic value: the benefit of following a particular educational drive. A few examples are as follows: the corporate orientation emphasizes cost effective education, the production orientation ensures a quality product, and the consumer model aims for satisfaction. My analysis of this educational matrix leaves me struggling to confidently locate the outdoor approach I propose. Teaching outside does not seem to complement any of these orientations. I am left wondering if there is room for teaching outside as an instructional strategy under the current institutional agendas.

In "Techniques and philosophy: Blending roots? Or sowing maybe-seeds in outdoor adventure education," Bowles (1996) identifies a variety of conflicting philosophies and the underlying values that have influenced the development and direction of outdoor-experiential education. His findings suggest that outdoor adventure education (which includes an environmental emphasis) and the more experiential ways of learning are still intrinsically at the margins of pedagogy. He challenges educators to develop and articulate a generalized framework that harmonizes inside practices with outside strategies. Such a framework could incorporate and balance existing instructional elements in schools, but allow for individual, social and natural elements of learning that include accepted outside practices. My dissatisfaction with Bowles' assessment is his lack of explicit description of what he considers accepted. My familiarity with teachers leading children outside, and my own outside lessons with children, informs me that teachers must first research the significance of pedagogical experiences to better understand the implications and potential of educating children outdoors before we can claim to know what constitute accepted and unacceptable outside practices.

Pedagogical Language: Outside–Inside

The language I use inside a classroom to provide pedagogical explanations does not serve me in the same way when I move outside the school. The generative words teachers use in education carry pedagogical considerations that cross over indoor-outdoor boundaries, but are uniquely articulate within an educative context. Language can reveal pedagogical distinctions from inside to outside, but education is dominated by words that seem to exercise relevance inside. Because language communicates conventions, the struggle becomes one of making sense of indoor pedagogy in an outside space. Language guides the indoor–outdoor experience and situates peoples' normative views of education and the use of space, inside–outside, and place, inside–outside. Modern education may very well be dominated by the conception that education is to be conducted by the conventionality of practice: textbooks, four-walled classrooms, and the outside world that is filtered by a teacher. However, moving education outside challenges conventional practice, in part because the language we have at our disposal captures little of the experience of outside education.

The stories I have collected here present an array of meanings. The meaning of a word used pedagogically inside undergoes a slight, but crucial transformation when transported outdoors. Altering the educative context challenges teachers' quotidian understandings and familiar exercise and habitation of language. Therefore, the meanings of words and how teachers use language during outside experiences with children provide the structure of each chapter. Both inside and outside *connotations* and *denotations* are explored to capture the subtleties of these disparate teaching experiences. A sample of these words includes the following: *insecurity*, *risk*, *adventure*, *patience*, *hope*, *fear*, *challenge*, *comfort*, *security*, *control*, and *worry* are just a few. The following chapters seek to capture and articulate curricular implications as they apply to the pedagogical experiences shared by each teacher participant in this thesis.

CHAPTER 2

PHENOMENOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS ON INSIDE AND OUTSIDE

Inside and outside logically depend on one another for the experience of each, as it contributes to our sense of being in the world. An over-riding concept for this study is: As teachers, when we go out, do we enter the outside world, or do we leave the inside world to find ourselves pedagogically inward in reflection? Advancing this concept is important in establishing the distinctions of inside–outside. The act of taking a class outside the building can create for teachers a unique inner-reflected experience that reveals the relational meaning of pedagogy. In this chapter, I reflect on the phenomenological and philosophical implications of the dependent relationship between inside and outside. I begin by examining modern deconstructionist's ideas about inside and outside, in comparison to Plato's sense of transcendent reality using the Greek term *epekeina* (beyond). In the second section I reflect on the comparative reality for teachers of inside and outside. Finally, I reflect on the metaphoric dimensions of going outside as an act that has been portrayed as reluctant acceptance of leadership for a transcendent quest within society.

The In and Out of *Epekeina*

Derrida (2002) states individuals can discover their self, (their inside self) by going outside; then going inward by reflection to understand the body experience. Inside-out can reveal a self truth; a truth that may not be easy to accept. Expressing our inward understandings to those outside of ourselves can be a powerful experience. From Derrida I understand the importance as a simple reliance of the inside to the outside. One needs the other to exist:

> From the invisible inside, where I could neither see nor want the very thing I have always been scared to have revealed … by 'analysis'— a crural vein expelled my blood outside that I thought beautiful once stored in that bottle under a label that I doubted could avoid confusion or misappropriation of the vintage, leaving me nothing more to do, the inside of my life exhibiting itself outside, 'expressing' itself before my eyes, absolved without a gesture, dare I say of writing if I compare the pen to the syringe, and I always dream of a pen that would be a syringe, a suction point rather than that very hard weapon with which one must inscribe, incise, choose, calculate, take ink before filtering the inscribable. Playing the keyboard on the screen, whereas here, once the right vein has been found, no more toil, no responsibility, no risk of bad taste or violence, the blood delivers itself all alone, the inside gives itself up, and you can do as you like with it, it's me but I'm no longer there. (Derrida, pp. 10–12)

The outside always haunts the inside; the other always haunts one, and one always needs the other. Heidegger (1962) explains this as an intricate balance between how this relationship is to be understood: Between seeking experiences (*Erlebnis*) in the outside world, intensifying experiences (*Erfahrungen*) on the inside through reflection, and living through experiences (*Erleben*) (pp. 71–72). As Derrida positions, reflection is an inward experience to make sense of being in the world. The ancient Greeks frequently used an expression, *ekstatikon*, to describe the experience of a person "stepping-outside-self." This term is affiliated with "existence [, which] … viewed ontologically, is the original unity of being-outside-self that comes-toward-self, [and] comes-back-to-self" (Heidegger, 1982, p. 267). This common ancient expression is applicable to the lived experience of an outside teacher stepping outside her or his lifeworld, but going inward, pedagogically, to understand the experience. Stepping outside for the teacher may be more than the physical stepping out into the world. Heidegger's (1982) *Dasein* is a human projection of "understanding belonging to existence" (p. 278). What, then, are lived experience, existence, and "being-in-the-world" for a teacher who steps outside the establishment of school?

Plato (trans. 1968, p. 193) tells the story of a cave dweller who leaves the world he has known to follow the dazzle and brilliance of the light. By following the brightness, the dweller leaves the center of the world, the cave (see Figure 2). The cave represents everything that has been known and understood. To step outside the cave allowed the cave dweller to look back on his world from a different perspective. Yet, outside, the cave dweller was also able to see the world as it was intended for those within the cave world. The dweller sees actual beings, not just shadows, but something real and outside the cave world of his life. Upon the dweller's return, he

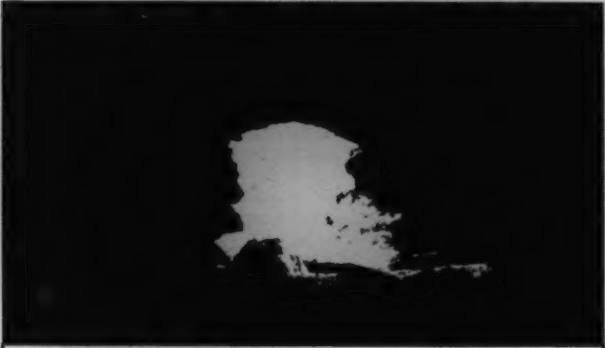

Figure 2: Seeing the outside from inside a cave. Note the brightness that illuminates the cave entrance. Photograph taken by A. Foran.

proceeds to tell the others, but they take him for being mad. Plato's intention, in the story, is to help others perceive the discovery of actuality:

> [The] condition for the possibility of recognizing something as a shadow in distinction from the real does not consist in my seeing an enormous quantity of given things. If the cave dwellers were to see more clearly for all eternity only what they now see on the wall, they would never gain insight that it is only shadows … the possibility of understanding the actual as actual. (Heidegger, 1982, p. 285)

For Plato, this is the search of *epekeina tes ousias*: to step outside the narrow mindedness of one's own common sense, to see the sun, the eye of all knowledge, and the light outside the cave; to embrace *epekeina* "is the condition of possibility for all knowledge" (Heidegger, p. 285).

Extending this analogy, what is the experience for the teacher in public education to leave the classroom? In following the light, in order to see the world and be in the outside world, do teachers experience something that is absent from the inside world? Do they, the ones who abandon the security of the given inside-teaching-world, experience *Philo*, the shedding of light in their world? Arendt (1978) captures, for me, the need to illuminate the outside teaching experience by presenting the following, which depicts part of her perception of the "crises in education" (p. 173). She posits that being outside the school is to be really inside the world and the classroom inside the school is a place that is outside the world. The classroom world, she argues, represents an abstraction of the real world.

My interest is not to argue about or solve the crises in education, but rather to present the moment of lived experiences of teaching "inside the world." Like Arendt (1978), I too contend, "human beings are born into the world" (p. 174). Arendt furthers this position with the following assertion:

> The child is first introduced to the world in school. Now school is by no means the world and must not pretend to be; it is an institution that we interpose between the private domain of home and the world in order to make the transition from the family to the world possible at all. (pp. 188–189)

My concern is whether teaching outside the school is a violation of this transition. An outdoor practice may very well be an act of circumventing the transition. If so, I must then realize that childhood is a natural hurdle protecting children from being in the world with adults, for this world is barred to children (see Arendt, 1978, p. 182). It is only when children have outgrown childhood that the youth of society enter into the adult world. Arendt states that children grow into an "old world," gradually and the role for educators is to prepare them for their place in it (p. 177). Important here is for educators to preserve school as an in-between place: home and the outside world and for my study this would include a more natural world than Arendt has written about.

Arendt (1978) is clear when she states that teachers must know about the world and that their role is to "instruct others about it" (p. 189). In this context, the "function of the school is to teach children what the world is like and not to instruct them in the art of living" (p. 195). Is taking children outside the school a crossing of a line? This question is critical to ask for the reason of expectations that are placed on children when they leave the school. Children are expected to do more in looking after themselves. What do teachers experience when they enter into this other world filled with strangers? The phenomenological elements of my study present the following themes of the lived experiences of a teacher engaged in outdoor practice: intensity, fear, freedom, openness, empowerment, excitement, authenticity, challenge, risk, adventure, and vulnerability. Through an interpretive lens, this research study incorporates teacher experiences, experiential-educational literature, and outdoor-educational practices to further reveal or confirm these themes. I further analyze the outside teaching experience by examining metaphors, figures of speech, and specific vocabularies used in educational literature, and investigate how this terminology is positioned as an educational practice within the larger field of curriculum theory and instruction.

Inside, Outside or Being-in-One-World

Has the outside become something strange, foreign, or other to teachers? Human control over space has allowed for micro-worlds separated from the space of the real world. These micro-worlds of school are places of tension. Schools are awkward places, for they distinctly segregate students' being from the world, but their primary function is to prepare students for the world. The tension resides in how we as teachers prepare our students through courses and how much of the real world can we use in this preparation! The tension between the inside-outside could exist because of our prolonged absences—existing within inside spaces for extended periods of time—contributing to our forgetting a world of outside living.

Krall (1988) struggled with this connecting of worlds. In her writing, she juxtaposes the natural world and her lifeworld as an academic. In "Behind the

Chairperson's Door: Reconceptualizing Women's Work," Krall, in her direct simplicity and lyricism, creates a blending of horizons:

> The [chairperson's] door behind which I sit opens into a small office with one wall of southern-facing windows. From my desk, I witness the progression of seasons: clouds building over the mountains to sudden, summer showers; leaves dusting the lawn autumn-yellow; drab-coated gold finches, back dropped by winter snow, feeding on dry catskins; spring greening, succession; years blending into an eternity. (p. 496)

Krall contrasts this observed world with the everyday reality of being inside. The administrative realities of an educator are revealed in sections that describe the "ringing of the phone," "a knock on her office door," and "opening the door to another" (see pp. 495–513). Krall is phenomenological in her passage in that she evokes the concrete elements of her everyday struggles. She portrays the lived experience itself, the everyday of her inside-office world looking at the outside world. Her dictum continues to struggle towards a solution that "blends" her worlds together:

> The seasons are too short. But, out of the litter of summer's bloom will sprout new forms. The door of my office is open and departmental life seeps in. Perhaps I'll move my desk so that the two horizons can blend and I can meet both worlds full force as I would the tree falling toward me in the forest, with full awareness, awakeness, and responsiveness. (Krall, p. 512)

Krall, ironically, uses the "real" outside to present the inside reality from a feminist perspective. It is when she opens the door that readers realize what world she allows to "seep in." It is the world of her academic department, not the world that is beyond. That outside world still remains to observe, to write about, and to draw on for self-understanding, but from the inside world (see Figure 3). However, I detect that Krall, like many other educators, sees a threat when leaving the exit behind. For it is in the outside world were we face threats to our being, trees falling toward our very lives. Is the outside is only something to observe from the safety of indoors?

As teachers, our understanding of the term outside, and our conception of teaching inside, often dictates our pedagogical practice. Thus the tension of this inside space is comparable to the tension between the inner world of self, and outer world of self. What we think and believe on the inside influences our being in the world, the outside. To start understanding inner worlds better, I turn my wonder to the secret places of children. Children are always creating micro-worlds, those inner places, outside of their immediate world, even if only temporarily. Those brief childhood moments of their secret worlds may offer a brief glimpse into how an adult, the pedagogue, and students may perceive going outside. For some teachers, the classroom is a secret place that allows them to practice teaching undisclosed. Knowingly or unknowingly, I believe many teachers see the outer world beyond their classroom as removed from the world of school. Other teachers engaged in an outdoor practice may see their practice as something

Figure 3: The window as a view and a barrier between the inside and outside world. Photograph taken by A. Foran.

of a secret, but somehow different, because of the exposure that results from the absence of the protective classroom.

I can now firmly situate this study as an examination of the tension between the inner and outer worlds. Langeveld (1983a, 1983b) points out that the secret place of childhood is a place for children to withdraw from the public world. This place becomes a sanctuary where they can think about the outer world and safely observe. Does this hold true for the classroom? Langeveld shares a phenomenological insight that interprets this secret place as the distinction between an inner and outer world where these worlds may melt into one. This would be a single world of uniqueness, safety, and innocence. This is a place consisting of darkness, solitude, freedom, waking dreams, and creative imagination. For this study, it is important to see that Langeveld evokes a secret place that has indistinguishable margins. If adults could achieve what children do within their secret places, we, as educators, could have the following:

> Interactions with others [that] are temporarily suspended in the secret place[;] this does not mean that others are not in some sense present in this space. Physically others remain on the outside, but they are still present on the inside because they are still seen or observed by the child (Langeveld, 1983b, p. 14).

The classroom may very well be the teacher's secret place of the inside world, but it is my hope to create "secret places" out there, in a wide-open space.

Inside school the boundaries are made distinct, for the inside is separate from the outside world. Observation tends to be more of a watching of the outside through windows, like Krall's. I can recall numerous times as a student, and teacher, gazing out the window, drifting in thought, and imagining the possibilities. Staring outside excited the senses, but the inside world always had a way of shocking me back inside by the ringing of a bell, a voice, or a distraction. This interruption of an inner secret place is a reminder that I am in here, dreaming of out there. Langeveld reminds me that the real secret place of a child is where "direct understanding reigns" (1983a, p. 13). I wonder if the classroom is not a teacher's attempt to regain the possibilities of a secret place. In claiming a classroom as one's own, we as teachers might very well remove ourselves from the outside world, like the child. A possible result of this maneuver could be the estrangement of the outside from our pedagogical practice. In establishing our classrooms we inadvertently structure our version of the world. Leaving this inner world could become difficult, and the simple act of stepping outside of a school to teach may not be possible for some teachers. Is the world only to be viewed from the window, the text, and the experience of the inner classroom? Van Manen (2002a) guides a phenomenological inquiry to consider language as the "analysis and etymological sources [that] can help us orient to the semantic variations and the meanings of possible human experiences" (p. 270). Etymology may help us to understand the notion of outside, and how it is woven into our being-in-the-world.

The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology (Hoad, 1986) explains that in Old English, out was termed *ut,* from the Proto-Indo-European base *ud*. The meaning of out is understood in modern times to be the unconscious, and refers to things that are no longer popular or out of style in the modern sense. In Old English out, or the verb *utian*, meant "to expel." This verb took on the meaning of exposing someone or something in more current usage: "to out somebody." People use out in many expressions: Outspoken, outlandish, out of the way, out-and-out, out of this world (excellent), and out to lunch (insane) (p. 328). Something that is considered out has been understood as an object that is outward, outlying, foreign, exterior, or even external. Old English phrased this as *utland,* which is presently used to describe the outskirts, the outside: an area that is external. It could be that people understand outside as a distinct boundary, for during the medieval period the English language made use of the word *ynneside*, the "interior of the body" (p. 237). Thus what is inside is closer to our being, somehow a part of us. It could be that ontologically we view our constructed spaces, the inside dwellings, as closer to our *ynneside*? All else is external to our world. Thus we instinctively have come to understand the existence of separate worlds, distinct with clear boundaries, the world inside, and the foreign world out there. The school is an accepted world; beyond the doors there exists the outside, a foreign and perhaps forbidden world.

Will Others Follow Outside?

"In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit" (Tolkien, 2000, p. 1). This is the famous sentence that opens the fantasy world of *The Hobbit*. In this world of Middle Earth, Bilbo Baggins lives a quiet and comfortable life in his snug, tidy, little hobbit hole in the Shire. His life has been spent satisfying his deep love of food and rousing adventure stories. One day, the legendary wizard—and for my purposes, pedagogue—Gandalf arrives at his door with some dwarf friends and a proposal for real adventure. Bilbo is hesitant to leave his comfortable life, but eventually agrees to join the dwarves in their quest to regain lost treasure and defeat Smaug, a powerful dragon. Before Bilbo leaves on his quest, however, he must be coaxed to leave his inner world, and move outside of his Hobbit hole, well beyond the shire of Hobbiton. If he agrees to go outside into the world of uncertainty, he will face and live adventures that range beyond merely listening to stories.

The main character of the story is the hobbit Bilbo. Hobbits are a race of small, humble, food-loving creatures. They live in the hillsides of Hobbiton, and it is a rare occasion indeed for one of them to stray from their community. When a hobbit does actually leave the confines of its society, stories and rumors proliferate, and distrust burgeons, within the order of neighbors, for the individual going *outside*, it is assumed, must be one of the strange–an outsider. The hobbits of the Shire considered the Baggins family "respectful, not only because most of them were rich, but also because they never had any adventures or did anything unexpected" (Tolkien, 2000, p. 2). Gandalf is a wise wizard who sees in Bilbo something that Bilbo himself cannot see—more than has been observed by those in his small world. Gandalf sees Bilbo's power and enthusiasm for life and living. As a wizard, Gandalf is from the outside world and this distinction enables him to observe Bilbo's strengths. Unlike other conforming hobbits, Bilbo is free-spirited, and it is this spirit that steers and drives him to go where no other hobbit has gone before. Gandalf becomes a teacher for Bilbo; there exists a pedagogical bond between the two, but for the reader, at the beginning, we are unsure what lessons Gandalf intends for Bilbo to discover. I wonder what went through the mind of Gandalf as he encouraged Bilbo to leave his comfortable, secure, and predictable world to venture past the borders of the Shire. I am curious to know what Gandalf experienced when Bilbo agreed to go outside, and to follow (or lead, as he later does in the story) others into the unknown of Middle Earth. Outside the Shire, Gandalf had to assume a greater responsibility for his aspiring sage Bilbo Baggins, but how? Do teachers, like Bilbo, need someone to encourage them to take that first step into the outside?

> To the end of his days Bilbo could never remember how he found himself outside, without a hat, a walking-stick or any money, or anything that he usually took when he went out; leaving his second breakfast half-finished and quite unwashed-up, pushing his keys into Gandalf's hands, and running as fast as his furry feet could carry him down the lane, past the great Mill, across The Water, and then on for a mile or more. (Tolkien, p. 29)

Bilbo Baggins proved that he was different from the other hobbits. This inner difference separated and excluded him from the Hobbiton society—he was outside, but on the inside of his world. However, this would never have been realized had Bilbo Baggins not decided that his desire to see far, outreaching planes was greater than he imagined.

What made Bilbo leave his comfortable life? Gandalf does not force Bilbo, but rather provides him with a gentle reminder to meet his dwarf comrades. Gandalf's prompting encourages Bilbo to follow and to seek something that could not be found within a place called Hobbiton. Overwhelmed by this new sensation, Bilbo Baggins sets off for the road, trading in his walking-stick made for the Shire, for walking companions—dwarfs. Bilbo commits himself to a new desire, a new life, and a quest. Many of the readers can relate to Bilbo's inner turmoil as he agrees to adopt an entire lifestyle change; yet we can place ourselves in the shoes of Gandalf, the one who is responsible for orchestrating this grand adventure. For even Gandalf proves unsure and unprepared for all the challenges the journey would offer the company of adventurers.

Does going outside to teach have to be a grand adventure? Are the teachers that practice outside of school actually strangers (like Gandalf observing the inside world of others from an outside perspective) to the teaching community? Do we always have to go outside to discover and learn; can we not have grand adventures within the classroom?

I think this is possible and I was able to reconcile this likelihood from Crumbfest's outside—inside discovery. Weale (1999) shares a winter story of mice who retreat indoors, away from the grass, trees, sunshine, and flowers for the colder months—there are two seasons for mice, the Inside Season and the Outside Season. Eckhart the mouse, the protagonist, has a great adventure discovering the mystery of the true meaning of Crumbfest. Eckhart makes very clear his distain for being cooped up inside and compounding this was the lack of food and the limits of exploration to the kitchen area of the house. However, every year there would be an overabundance of crumbs as if some magic intervention provided all the mice with more tasty morsels than can be imagined. "The mice had a name for this abundance. They called it Crumbfest, and over the years it became the most important celebration in mouse society" (Weale, p. 4).

Eckhart was a curious and inquisitive mouse and wanted to know the reason and meaning for Crumbfest, but no answer was satisfactory for his youthful imagination. The day arrived for Eckhart when the crumbs appeared in abundance and the feast was amazing. After a couple of days of feasting, the little mouse decided to go exploring despite the warnings of risk. The risk is great considering mice are creatures of the outside and are not meant to know the secrets of inside. Eckhart was determined to discover the reason for Crumbfest. Eckhart left the security of the hallow wall and left the mouse hole. He crept through the silent, large, dark, and somewhat scary house.

Following his nose, for Eckhart was smelling a familiar scent, he finally, with a pounding heart, discovered what he was looking for. He entered a very large room and discovered a fir tree: "A beautiful green tree from the Outside was right there in front of him, on the inside" (Weale, 1999, p. 16). The tree was decorated with things from the outside as well. Eckhart felt "wonder-full" (p. 21). He now knew and had to tell the other mice. He explained it in this way: "The mystery of Crumbfest is the mystery of the Outside and the Inside. When the Outside comes in and the Inside comes out, it's a special time, for when the Outside and the Inside meet, Crumbfest happens" (Weale, p. 24). It is in that meeting that Eckhart discovered magic of the world, the inside magic of Christmas. Do teachers experience the "wonder-full" as the pedagogical in teaching children?

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

How teachers experience outside with children, pedagogically, is central to this thesis. Gaining access into the lifeworld of outdoor educators is possible through their lived experiences leading children outside their classrooms. Phenomenology is an examination of lived experiences and the showing of this experience. This chapter presents the methodological approach taken to access this inner world of teachers outside the school. Phenomenology asks simply what an experience is like and, through various sources of data the experience—in this instance the outside experience can be made more recognizable through a textual (re)presentation of the lived experience. The method of data collection is a way to reveal the taken-for-granted in teaching outside the school and present the concrete in teaching outdoors. The moment of teaching outside the school is made discernible to the reader through the shared lived experiences from seven teachers practicing in Nova Scotian schools (as approved by the Research Ethics Board of the University of Alberta. See Appendix B for approval).

The Outside Focus: Dimensions of Data Collecting

My focus on the outside teaching experience was influenced by Ceppi and Zini's (1998) presentation of the *Children, Spaces, Relations: Metaproject for an Environment for Young Children*, supported by The Reggio Children and Domus Academy Research

Center. Ceppi and Zini report on the educational experiences of children of the Reggio Emilia school in Italy. The focus of their research was an examination of the outside environment meeting the inside educational world. Creating a learning place, by blending the inside with the outside, allowed Reggio Emilia educators to determine desirable characteristics of a designated space for young children as part of their learning environments. In creating a learning place, the space was considered for natural qualities of light, color, materials, smell, sound, as they affect the microclimate. Ceppi and Zini considered these outside qualities, with others, as central and primary to the learning development of children. The findings from this research center provides not only an analysis of classroom space and design, but asks the practical indications needed for both the interior and exterior design of schools for young children. Important here for my work was to see Ceppi and Zini's images where the outside meets the inside learning environment (see Figure 4). I then began asking questions that focus on the pedagogical, the architectural, the environmental design, and the educational need for the outdoors, as issues that form the theoretical basis of my research.

Figure 4: Outside looking in; natural light in reflection. Where the inside and outside microclimates meet. Photographed by Rob Rudeski, used with permission (see Appendix A).

By asking the question "What is the pedagogical significance for teachers in educative experiences outside the school?" I have focused on the lived experiences of teachers who incorporate outside-teaching components within their practice. As an outdoor educator in Nova Scotia, I became aware of other teachers in the province who have outside involvement. These teachers, who utilize the outdoors, were asked to share their lived-experience descriptions through two informal interviews and by crafting an anecdote that captured a specific pedagogical moment they experienced teaching outdoors. The purpose of the first recorded interview was to explore their outdoor teaching experiences and isolate one particular lived experience that was pedagogically significant. The first interview was largely to illicit their impressions and descriptions of outside experiences and to structure the framework for their written anecdote. The second interview was probe more deeply into each of their anecdotes through interpretive conversations. The second interview was pivotal in allowing us to interpret their experiences leading students outside for instruction. It is through the concrete data of experiential moments that I can access, as closely as possible, the pre-reflective moments of teaching outdoors. Because each interview was structured as conversations, the questions I asked and pursued varied (refer to the appendix B for the sample of interview questions).

Phenomenology as a method revealed the richness of the lived experience of a teacher engaged pedagogically, but outside the school. The purpose was to return to the experience of teaching in the outdoors and to ask the question: What is the nature or meaning of a lived experience (see van Manen, 1997, p. 9; 2001)? This study is an examination of the phenomena of the lived experiences of educators implementing lessons in an outdoor classroom covering a range of academics, disciplines, and programs. A qualitative approach conducting open-ended phenomenological–hermeneutic conversations, with my selected educators, showed pedagogical insights as a result of the outdoors. To understand the pedagogy of the outdoors, I wanted to discover the *inside reality* of these experiential events through phenomenological hermeneutic inquiry (see van Manen, 1997; 2001). Applying a hermeneutic circle (Grondin, 1994; Smits, 1997), I sought to strengthen the experiential meanings gained from each of the transcribed conversations, and from literature related to teaching in the outdoors. This phenomenological investigation was critical for this study in my efforts to discover the meaning dimensions of the experience for each teacher involved.

Anecdotal Stories: Meanings and Views

Anticipating the researching, data gathering, and reflective writing that is involved phenomenologically, I asked myself, as a starting point to this study, "When did the outside world become something *other* in teachers' ontological understanding?" After all, in earlier centuries, much of children's formal learning took place outdoors, and even today, in many of the world's villages, children continue to learn formally, with a teacher, under the shade of a tree using the dust as a slate. To begin to develop and articulate an ontological understanding, one would have to start with how the outside is *currently* experienced in education. Cousins and Mednick (1999) worked with a number of outdoor teachers to capture and portray their lived experiences. The model supporting each biographical story is the "Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound" (ELOB) framework designed for comprehensive school improvements that use the Outward Bound philosophy to make learning more hands-on, project-based, and adventurous. This collected work infuses the voices of teachers with accounts of students' service-based projects. Many of the stories focus on the surrounding community and on how service deepens intellectual growth. They posit that it is the growth due to the very experience that provides a powerful motivation to learn. These *stories of reflection* offer a rich and intimate understanding of what the teachers experienced in the moments they left the school to teach in accordance to the ELOB model of instruction. Each story is a small potential footbridge, allowing the method of phenomenology to present what can be seen. Stories aim to be accounts of lived experiences, providing concrete views to teaching outside the school.

The stories—anecdotes—involved in this study represent a careful blend of teacher reflections, researcher reflections, and significant literary sources. The resulting thesis is a text of theory and practice: a lived praxis (see Smits, 1997) of outdoor education. I, therefore, present the research as reflective stories. The stories are grounded in their situated contexts within the outside experience. My reflections, as advocated by Smits (1997), involve "attending to multilayered narratives, ones that also extend beyond the self that is narrowly conceived in the discourse of reflection" (p. 17). The first layer of storytelling requires me to contextualize the outside experience for each instructional strategy that encouraged the teacher to leave the school within the existing research in the field of outdoor education. In the second layer, I use transcribed-biographical accounts of the teachers' experiences and their anecdotes, and align these with my own autobiographical account as an outside teacher. The third layer combines the first and second layers in a reflexive relationship in which the telling, the living, and the retelling of stories form a hermeneutic circle (Smits, 1997). The fourth layer is reserved for the experiential learning connections made by the teachers and by me as researcher. This layer contains meaningful knowledge and has the potential to inform future practices of preservice teachers and practicing educators.

In using the phenomenological method, I immediately engage in the contextual ambiguity of lived experiences. These experiential meanings are provisional glimpses and fleeting images of partially concrete grounded meanings, which are presented through the reduction method. This method is powerful, insightful, and a tangible extension of the lifeworld due to the varied meanings and possible viewpoints enabled by the experiential. This method best utilizes the specific research technique of the written anecdote: the "lived experience description" (van Manen, 1997, p. 39). Van Manen (1997) explains this methodological device as crucial to the phenomenological showing, "to make comprehensible some notion that easily eludes us" (p. 116). The crafting of anecdotes, written by teachers through reflective conversations, provides the data to support my research. The anecdote is a portrayal of a concrete lived experience; it attempts to capture the "phenomenological now" and guards against "abstract theoretical thought" (see van Manen, 1997, p. 119). The purpose of the anecdote is to open up the researcher to the lifeworld of teachers leading children outside schools. These stories provide a suspended, bracketed moment of a "here and now" (see Merleau-Ponty, 1962) outside the school. The uniqueness, distinctiveness, and inevitable vagueness of each story becomes a part of the thematic structure that organizes the chapters of this dissertation.

The use of anecdotes, within the phenomenological method, is not intended to validate science, prove theories, or establish factual-empirical quantification (see van Manen, 1997, p. 116). My concern is not with what is construed as the evidential, or with a real account of events. Each anecdotal description, though bordering on fiction, is based on actual experiences. My goal as the researcher is to craft and shape each account to achieve reader recognition—the phenomenological showing. Thus, it is my responsibility to reveal to the reader the outside teaching experience of what is recognizable in and evoked by each anecdote.

To explore this pre-reflective lived experience, each anecdote was molded within the experiential moment. The focus must allow others to see the outside teaching experience for its uniqueness and then speculate about what is absent. This writing and re-writing has drawn not only on the written anecdotes of outside teachers, but also on other literary sources. Van Manen (1997) writes, "literature, poetry, or other story forms serve as a fountain of experiences to which the phenomenologist may turn to increase practical insights" (p. 70). The challenge is not to present a non-fictional account of outside teaching, but to evoke within the mind of the reader the lived experience of teaching outside. The anecdotes not only provide an intimate link to past moments, but also, with hermeneutical reflection, provide those elements needed to inform pedagogical practices outside school.

My methodological objective is to make connections with a "practical pedagogic orientation to children in their concrete lives" (van Manen, 1988, p. 411) and to view the teacher in the outdoors. However, I must consider Gadamer's important emphasis on "remaining open to experience in our encounters with the world as a creative way of being in the world. Hermeneutics is not about the recovery of existing or previously inscribed meanings, but the creation of meaning" (as cited in Smits, 1997, p. 17). The examination of the outdoor lifeworld of the teacher (and the researcher) within this method, involves a shared educational experience outside the school. The teachers' stories of their experiences focus on what they understood to be their outdoor educational journey. Their reflections are "grounded in context … to depict and comprehend … the subject's past upon the educational experience of the individual in the present" (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1996, p. 416). Huebner (1975a) considers such reflections to be a valued activity in the educational curriculum. He explains, "The fullness of the educational activity, as students encounter each other, the world around them, and the teacher, is all there is. The educational activity is life—and life's meanings are witnessed and lived in the classroom" (pp. 227–228). However, I wonder if Huebner included the *outdoors* as an activity or as a classroom outside the school. In this framework, I have had to value my own experiences as a teacher outside the school. Using van Manen's (1997) words, I must not be: "*introspective* but *retrospective*. Reflection on lived experience is always recollective; it is reflection on experience that is already passed or lived through" (p. 10). What can be said for teaching outdoors and what lessons can the researcher learn before proceeding into the lifeworld of outdoor educators?

The "Now" Experience of the Phenomenological Analysis

I can only use my imagination to create and present the inner experience of Gandalf, a fictional example of an outdoor pedagogue. Tolkien's (2000) inner world of fantasy bars me from really entering that created space. My only access is through my imagination and the small excerpts that reveal Gandalf's pedagogical role. Yet, phenomenology finds a philosophical rooting in the affirmation of human lived experiences. This rooting draws on experiential, concrete experiences, but also relies on a range of artistic, imaginary, and descriptive texts to show us the moment, the "phenomenological now" (Moran, 2001, p. 43). By using descriptive sources I resist the abstraction of philosophy, scientific empiricism, and argued explanation. To examine the pedagogical significance of teaching outside the school, this study draws upon a qualitative human science research methodology characterized as a phenomenological hermeneutic inquiry (see van Manen, 1997). Phenomenology provides the description of the lived experiences, and hermeneutics reveals an understanding of the moment through interpretation. This methodology can be harnessed to articulate the poignant insights of teachers' experiential moments outside school. Phenomenology can evoke the significant differences of the outside-inside-school experience, but it is the taken-for-granted of teaching outside the classroom that eventually become visible and interpretable. This method includes descriptions of lived experiences (the research datum) and allows the researcher to borrow and combine literary elements from a variety of sources. It is hoped the phenomenological writing analysis I use reveals the experiential moments of teaching in the outdoors. It is this moment that can provide needed acknowledgement about the lifeworld of a teacher's outside pedagogical practice.

Teachers' Lived Experiences as Phenomena for Reflection

The phenomena of teachers' lived experiences outside a typical classroom reveal the pedagogical dimensions in an outdoor curriculum. The sources of concrete moments from the seven teachers are their impressions, understandings, connections, and stories of teaching in the outdoors. The purpose is to discover the essence of the experience for each person involved. For example, Patton (as cited in Merriam, 1998) makes the following assertion regarding experience:

> These essences are the core meanings mutually understood through a phenomenon commonly experienced. The experiences of different people are bracketed, analyzed, and compared to identify the essences of a phenomenon, for example, the essence of loneliness, the essence of being a mother, or the essence of being a member in a particular program. (p. 70)

The challenge for me is to determine how an *outdoor* curriculum allows teachers to "move [their] consciousness… toward the world, not away from it" (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1996, p. 405). Husserl (1970) explains that phenomenological methodology connects the researcher to the *eidos*, the essence, in the experienced context of the "lifeworld" (*Lebenswelt*).

As I proposed my research I ask myself, "What am I trying to live out through my outdoor teaching practice?" For me, the art of teaching must involve an active reflection upon the personal, professional, spiritual, and intellectual aspects of my praxis as a teacher. For Dewey (1938), there is an inextricable intertwining of education, experience, and life in the sharing of knowledge. The primary goal of this study is to serve as a story to guide others in their educational journey outside school; stories of experiences about outside teaching that were lived by teachers with their students. Phenomenological understanding is realized through the autobiographical telling of teachers' stories, as "translating an experience into a story is perhaps the most fundamental act of human understanding" (McLaren, 1993, p. 206). Merleau-Ponty (1962) explains this in the following way:

> All my knowledge of the world, even my scientific knowledge, is gained from my own particular point of view, or from some experience of the world without which the symbols of science would be meaningless. The whole universe of science is built upon the world as directly experienced, and if we want to subject science itself to rigorous scrutiny and arrive at a precise assessment of its meaning and scope, we must begin by reawakening the basic experience of the world of which science is a second-order experience. (p. ix)

My hope is to have phenomenology, as a method, "re-awaken" teachers to the world by showing the experience of teaching outside. By actively reflecting on my outdoor practice I can learn about the richness of my own identity as a teacher and deconstruct the "taken-for-granted-ness" of teaching outside with other teachers who are interested in developing an outside-teaching practice. Smits (1996) captures this sense I am seeking:

> Gadamer helps us to think about the possibilities for being and understanding when he describes the reflective capacity as that which allows the naming of the experience through language … It has led me to question the relationship between self and the experiences of reflection, and the way that enables understanding of teaching in more than a limited technical sense. (p. 20)

I want to give voice to my experiences as a teacher (see Grumet, 1990; Miller, 1990). The uniqueness of my pedagogical arrangement stems from my involvement outside a place called school. The "phenomenological showing" (van Manen, 1997, p. 130) of the outside experience will blend the interview data shared by the participating teachers with my own understanding, and with other sources that contain outdoor insights, into a form of connected knowing during the writing process. Aoki (1988) points out that generated meanings are understandings "constructed actively by those who dwell within the situation" (p. 411). This is a personal investigation of other teachers in their outdoor lifeworld. Therefore, I need to employ a phenomenological sensitivity as I unravel the anecdotal evidence to bring into language the relational in each outside experience.

The concreteness of everyday lived experiences reveals itself through language. Heidegger (1962) claims that the everyday speaks, and through our daily language we as individuals can discover who we are currently, who we were, and who we aspire to become as human beings. Gadamer (1976, 1980, 1992, 2002) affirms historicity in everyday human experience as a dialectical understanding of what it means to be a human being. It is within language that the lived experience of each teacher teaching outside can be found, if care and sensitivity is forefront. Through the use of a phenomenological framework, engaged to see other teachers' experiences, I want to develop the pedagogical insight that can reveal, through articulation, the outside experience. From a hermeneutic perspective, I am interested in discovering the "quality of meanings" (see Aoki, 1991) for each outside story.

Intentionality: Descriptive Inside Meanings

This research study makes use of a descriptive-interpretative research process, a gathering of rich outside-teaching stories. A phenomenological lens best provides the method to address the numerous questions I have posed regarding teaching in the outdoors. The primary methods of data collection were in-depth reflective conversations (see Eisner, 1998; Friesen & Orr, 1996) conducted with each teacher. From this vantage point I employed "the reduction" as part of my methodology (van Manen, 1997, p. 185).

This method allows me to suspend re-awakening, and describe the lived experience. This is the phenomenological showing of the lived experience. Phenomenology is a process that brackets an experience, and by the unique approach of the researcher, uses descriptive text and language to craft the lived experience. To see this moment I have bracketed all my knowledge, all associated theory, and all belief of what constitutes the *real* in teaching outside the school (see van Manen, 2002b).

Influences that need bracketing, and that are of direct importance to this study, include a quagmire of theories of learning and ideas about teaching as a pedagogical act. One obstacle is that experiential education is often mistaken for being merely environmental education, or outdoor education (woodsy skills, climbing, kayaking, or canoeing). Yet my educational discussions, in formal and informal interviews, also included teachers who employ hands-on learning, activity-based education, community learning, and who teach in wilderness areas or on field trips away from the school. For this study, I position experiential education to include all forms of educational experiences within a range of practices that occur outside the school. The following is a taxonomy of experiential educational approaches: (a) *Outdoor Components*, such as adventure education, outdoor recreation, environmental education (Miles & Priest, 1990; Priest & Gass, 1997); (b) *Community Components*, such as community-based education, service learning, internships, apprenticeships, mentoring, adult education, creative and expressive arts (Kinsley & McPherson, 1995; Stanton, Giles, Jr., & Cruz, 1999); (c) *Classroom Components*, such as a project approach, cooperative learning, writer workshops, whole language, learning labs, peer tutoring, peer mediators, and expeditionary learning (Cousins & Rodgers, 1995; Mednick & Cousins, 1996; Sakofs &

Armstrong, 1996). This is not an all-inclusive taxonomy, but it does cover a range of popular experiential practices that are rooted in Dewey's pragmatic philosophy of education, used in schools and institutions of higher learning. Once researchers recognize the essence of experiential education, they can then recognize the instructional strategy in all its expressions. One way to approach this is to search for commonalities among every field labeled experiential education. The purpose of this study is to inquire about teacher experiences within these modalities of teaching.

In using the phenomenological method, I am not interested in weighing in on the so-called "Deweyian" debate about what constitutes experience in learning; rather, the focus of phenomenology centers on what was present or absent in the teachers' pedagogical experiences outside the school. Avoiding this debate on theoretical assumptions or pre-understandings in teaching methodology allows me to show, rather than argue about, the outside experience of teachers. From the pre-reflective moment, I attempt to capture the wonder of the outside experience and re-awaken the relational significance by informing readers of the meanings that are associated when teachers are outside with children. Many experiential educators argue about what constitutes practice, definition, taxonomy, and what is or is not experiential practice. I do not want to remain within the semantics of this debate; rather, I wish to "emulate the unreflective life of consciousness" (van Manen, 1997, p. 185) by the method of reduction. Through this reduction, the researcher can see the uniqueness of the experience, which allows for a more open investigation that remains true to the phenomena. The vital experience here is the phenomena of the teacher engaged in an experiential practice with children outside as a lived experience. The concrete in these meanings is the everyday occurrences for these educators. This reduction can reveal their lifeworld as they teach outside the school. Husserl (1970) posited that the lifeworld was a "world of immediate experience," a "world as already there," a "pregiven world," and a world that people experience in a "natural primordial attitude," simply that of an "original natural life." I am to show the lived experiences of teachers in their outside world with children.

Merleau-Ponty (1962) presents the complexity and simplicity of the phenomenological method as "a matter of describing, not of explaining or analyzing" (p. viii). Meanings garnered from the lived experiences of teachers engaged in pedagogical acts outside the school are identified by going inside the text. The anecdotes (text), are based on experiential moments outside the school. My study identifies and provides themes and illustrations of the phenomena that is currently lacking within the research field of curriculum theorizing.

Building a Bridge: The Gap Between the Inside and the Outside

Figure 5: The gap between two sides; a spanless divide. Photograph by A. Foran.

The purpose of a bridge is to span a divide. A bridge allows travel to and fro, and connects one world to another. I wonder how we experience this divide and what it may mean to speak of a bridge (see Figure 5). Of course, the notion of a bridge is just a metaphor. Are teachers the appropriate bridge between the inner worlds of students and the outer world of society? In schools has the outside and inside become opposing views to one another or are they complementary? To overcome this divide between the experiences of educators, literature, and current research, a phenomenological vantage point may connect the inside and the outside. When examining this divide, there emerges a critical lack of experiential data about the lifeworld of the outdoor educator. The majority of current research that examines teaching outside school is not conducted through a phenomenological lens. A review of the existing research has confirmed that there is a need for stories and anecdotes of concrete "lived experiences" to bracket for a phenomenological understanding. The suspension of lived experiences can show the reader the *phenomenological now* of teaching outside the school. This current review of research may prove to be a guide for extracting themes from the research findings, literary sources, and stories of teaching outside. A phenomenological contribution to this area of education can help develop teacher education and effectively convey to educators the pedagogical essence of the outside-teaching experience.

A bridge can provide many different perspectives from which to view the concrete aspects of the world. However, like Ryckmans (1996), I am not expecting a clear, coherent, and universal understanding of life experiences. Rather, I accept human experiences as "fragmented, and never tidily cut and packaged" (p. viii). In following Ryckmans' textual examination of reading, writing, and going abroad, I also heed his advice to not "veer far away from life" (p. viii). Phenomenology is the examination of the concrete, everyday lifeworld through lived experiences.

By anchoring the question "What is the pedagogical significance for teachers in educative experiences *outside* the school?" in a concrete examination of the everyday, I can focus solely on lived experiences from teachers who lead children outside the school. These teachers, who utilize the outdoors, have crafted anecdotes that capture specific moments experienced outdoors. The purpose of their anecdotes is to probe deeper into the phenomenological now of each lived experience. It is through this experiential moment in teaching outside that I can access, a closely as possible, and the pre-reflective moments of teaching outdoors and build a pedagogical bridge for other educators.

CHAPTER 4

A REVIEW OF THE CURRENT LITERATURE

Phenomenology examines what is taken for granted in lived experiences. The simple act of passing through the doorway, from the inside to the outside world, is one of those everyday, overlooked experiences. To go outside with a group of school children, however, is not a commonly accepted instructional occurrence. The inside act of teaching dominates curricular instruction. There is something unique in the outdoor teaching experience that requires examination from many vantage points to see and to understand what is experienced when a teacher leaves the school with a class. How can teaching outside be different? Many may recognize the experience of leaving the inside for the outside, but few have probably thought about the act in any depth. In this chapter I present the current literature as it pertains to my research question.

I first present research that captures a holistic view of outdoor programs. Second, I focus on relevant literature that shows school as a distinct place and how this impacts the learning experience outside the school. This naturally leads into literature that presents the roles of outdoor educators in the current educational system. However, for a phenomenological study, I do not limit my literature to this review. In this thesis I have drawn on a variety of literary sources to capture the view for teaching outside a school. The importance is to capture the uniqueness of the pedagogical moment outside, and this requires the researcher to be attuned to any relevant source that could provide that significant view into the pedagogical experience.

Views From the Bridge: Sources of Lived Experiences

In seeking out unique views, Aoki (1996) reminds me of the importance of being able to linger, reflect, and dwell. Aoki captures the pedagogical significance for me in the following:

> Bridges abound—small bridges, long bridges … moving goods and people. Today, we revel in the remarkable speed, lifelines we call them, and give thanks to all these bridges … for helping us to move from one place to another, the speedier the better, the less time wasted the better. But if I go to an Oriental garden, I am likely to come upon a bridge, aesthetically designed, with decorative railings, pleasing to the eyes … But on this bridge, we are in no hurry to cross over; in fact, such bridges lure us to linger … They are dwelling places for people. (p. 10)

With this in mind, I too lingered with the literature sources I found; I took time to dwell on the bridge they provided, the inside world of school and the inside being of the teacher, to the outside world of teaching. This thesis is not an argument about the best instructional methods. The purpose of this research is to offer an inside view of the teaching experience for teachers who engage children in outdoor curriculum. In Graham's (1986) translation of the Taoist text attributed to Chuang Tzu, he relates the story of Zhuang Zi. Zhuang ZI claimed that the fish he saw from a bridge were free and happy. His friend, Hui Zi argued that his claim was not logically possible, as Zhuang Zi was not a fish, and could, therefore, never understand fish. Zhuang Zi refuted his friend's logic, stating that because Hui Zi was not Zhuang Zi, he could never know his mind or his understanding. To answer the challenging question of whether the fish in the River Hao were happy, Zhuang Zi offered that it was possible for him to know from the bridge where they were viewing the fish (see p. 123).

Like Zhuang Zi, I can rely on my view—as a teacher of the outdoors and a researcher—to provide a phenomenological knowing of the outside teaching experience, regardless of empiricism or logic. I, too, can know from what I see—by the textual bridges teachers build—that allow me to view their outdoor classrooms. We all see the outside from the inside, and these anecdotes provide the span to view the experiential moments of an outdoor pedagogy. Each story does not provide a definite answer or even the truth. Through careful and selected writing, the outside stories merely allow the reader to see the lived experience of teaching outside. To cite Ryckman (1996), I am not interested in developing *the view from the bridge*, just recognizable insights. Phenomenology is the evocation in the reader of the experience as recognizable. I must meet the struggle to reveal what I think I see from the window of the school. The smoothest and clearest glass, at times, only offers opaque and refracted views. These stories are intended to bring the reader outside the school, and into the lived experience of the outdoor teacher. The literature reviewed in this chapter is but another bridge that I can use to help understand what I view from the anecdotes.

By questioning my outside teaching practice, I began to query accepted notions of most teachers' understanding of school. A superficial examination of school reveals that school is an institution for educating children; it is the buildings that house the pedagogical process; it is the pupils and teachers engaged within this educating progression of grade advancement; and it is the place where the training is evaluated by discipline and standards (Thompson, 1996, p. 813). Without taking a presumptuous stance, school is a reflection of societal expectations and the rules of conduct that govern communities. Simply put, it is a means whereby the world can be examined through subject areas. School is a place where a set schedule allows blocks of time for children to learn through professional instruction. However, I question whether the lexicographers consider school to include lessons conducted outside the classroom. My immediate sense is that such an expanded definition for school is somewhat outside the established "school of thought" (see Thompson, p. 813).

In exploring other possible conceptions of schools, and instruction that includes outside engagement, I sense many promising insights exist in a growing body of relevant research, and such research can aid my study to understand the outside teacher's experience. However, what is absent from an initial review of educational literature is the portrayal of the "lifeworld" (Husserl, 1970) of a teacher outside the school. There are a few limited examinations of teacher experiences, many of which could contribute to an understanding of the phenomena of outside teaching. Absent from current studies on outdoor education, outside pedagogy, and teaching outside, however, was a direct phenomenological connection to an outside-teaching experience. The following review of what is reported in the literature is organized by the following categories: examination of outdoor programs, school as place, the student experience, and possible glimpses of teachers' involvement in outside experiences.

Examining Outdoor Programs

Evident from the review of literature was the abundance of research that examined specifically the industry of outdoor programming. The links from this corpus of research to my thesis centered on the following categories: activity-based experiences, planning for outdoor education, and teachers outside their own area of specialization. A dominant theme that emanates from this literature is the rationalization of outdoor programming arguing to prove effectiveness and need within educational experiences for children.

Learning From Activity-Based Experience

In *The Power of Experiential Learning: A Handbook for Trainers and Educators*, Beard and Wilson (2001) pull together, for the first time, both the theory and practice of wide-ranging approaches in experiential education. Essentially, they cover all types of learning that employs an activity-based experience. However, the scope they offer is limited to a theoretical underpinning and detailed practical advice from personal workshop experiences. They offer supporting material to develop an experience-based program, and the focus of their work is in experiential-program design. This experiential design combines the philosophy of experience with learning theories, activities, and the key elements needed to learn experientially in a place. Their aim is to develop effective learning strategies for instruction that embrace a wide range of instructional approaches. However, the teacher's experience is noticeably absent in a collected work that summarizes the rapidly growing field of experiential education within academic instruction.

Despite the growth of the experiential field, the findings presented are often merely about the nature of experiential learning and how the experiential process can be applied in the classroom (Herbert, 1995). In Herbert's study, "Experiential Learning: A Teacher's Perspective," experiential learning may be viewed as a continuum that ranges from passive students receiving transmitted knowledge to active students deeply involved in generating knowledge from their own experiences. Herbert presents an experiential base for learning. The base reflects how students take responsibility for deriving meaning from what they have done and then make decisions about meaning, interpretation, and content. Five variables that Herbert isolates within the experiential process that influence the impact of experiential learning include the following: the reality of experience or relevance of vicarious experience, the level of risk and uncertainty, the students' sense of responsibility and personal investment in the activity, the unpredictability of specific outcomes and teachers' attitudes toward planning for predictability, and students' reflection that completed the learning process gathered from experience.

Herbert's (1995) study is significant because he clearly defines the problems of applying experiential learning in the classroom. He includes a discussion about the limitations of the classroom itself, the restrictions stemming from the school environment, and the need to create vigorous environments where students can be challenged. Herbert argues that an adventure education model can be used to overcome these difficulties, and strongly suggests that educators build adventures into the school curriculum. What Herbert does not articulate is how teachers could understand this adventure curriculum within an existing educational practice that views the classroom as sacred. Needed is a phenomenological examination of the outdoor, experiential, adventurous lifeworld of the outside teacher that portrays not only the educational program, but the lived experiences of teachers engaged not inside but outside the school.

Borton's (1977) research, "Reaching Them Where They Are: Guidelines for Developing Concomitant Instruction," opens the school to the outside world without the students and teacher actually leaving the confines of the classroom. He suggests a number of principles for planning "concomitant instruction" to effectively teach outside methods, but to do so inside schools. However, his pioneering vision has been to use media, by means of television, highway historical markers, cereal-box advertising, and other related devices, and then only for incidental instruction or in a non-educational function. Borton's research opened the classroom in a limited way.

Planning Outdoor Education

Miller (1974) presents many definitions and understandings of what outdoor education includes. In "A Manual of Outdoor Education," he proposes that outdoor education is teaching outside the classroom. This pedagogical act could combine and blend with the total curriculum found within schools. Miller hoped to develop an approach to outdoor education that can guide educators' instruction outside the school. His findings draw upon discussions of sensory awareness, discovery learning, group dynamics, and leadership. Miller's educational concept includes lesson units for teaching creative arts, language arts, natural science, math, physical education and recreation, and social science. His efforts have resulted in a working manual for teachers and recreation organizations; it offers samples of program forms (a daily program schedule, a letter to parents, a health form, a permission slip form); lists (equipment list, school menu list, activity sign-up sheets); and evaluations (camp rules and regulations, student instructors' responsibilities, camp contract). Miller does advance the technical aspect of an outdoor pedagogy; however, his work does not present a phenomenological awareness of what is experienced by a teacher outside the school. His examination does not reflect how the outdoors is experienced by teachers.

Teaching Outside One's Specialization

Knight (1987) offers an interesting, and contrasting, investigation of the causes, effects, and potential situational improvements of instructors who teach outside their primary area of specialization, but inside the school. The study concentrates on economics and, specifically, the Economics Education 14–16 Project, which utilized a nonspecialist classroom approach. His work contains not only classroom observations, but interviews with teachers, faculty heads, and advisors. This study may provide a juxtaposition of teaching "outside the subject specialization," but within the school.

Furthering the research in subject specialization, Cousins, Gadalla, Hannay, and Ross (1999) examine teachers' expectations of their ability to produce student learning within their varied teaching assignments. In their study, 359 teachers in nine restructuring secondary schools in one district, provide estimations of their ability to perform common teaching tasks in four of the courses they were expected to teach in the coming school year. Cousins et al.'s results show that teacher efficacy was lower for courses outside the teacher's specialization. The findings indicate that teacher efficacy is threatened when teachers move away from their home departments, either by teaching a course outside their subject or by facilitating curriculum activities that cross over departmental lines. However, their study does not take into account teacher experiences that went outside the instructional range (strategies), and outside the school. They suggest that reforms need to create coping structures and strategies that enable teachers to move out of departments.

What is needed is for this study to extend beyond the school to include outside teaching experiences. Still this reformist vision may include insights for teachers outside an area of perceived teaching familiarity and comfort.

The U.S. Office of Educational Research and Improvement (1998) published an “Information Series” that provides an outline for a vision of teacher education that is based on the concept of contextual teaching. This study examines teaching that enables learning in a variety of in-and-out-of-school contexts to solve simulated or real-world problems. The series is based on the realization that the construction of knowledge is situated within a four dimensional framework: the physical, the social, the cultural, and the subject matter. The findings highlight a few key areas to consider in teacher education. Approaching contextual teaching and learning requires the educator to begin with acknowledging the importance of environment as a unique role contributing to education. Understanding the role allows teachers to embrace community and to establish collaborative partnerships that can provide opportunities for authentic learning. Critical to forming a sound context for this experiential learning would be for teachers to account for a culturally relevant pedagogy. However, this series neglects the phenomenological awareness of teaching in an outside-place context, juxtaposed with the inside-place contextualization of educational practice. Lacking in this information series is an intimate understanding of what the teacher experienced within the out-of-school context.

School as a Place

As educational research and school practice evolve, the notion of a learning place is being challenged and in many instances redefined. The mounting pressures in society fuel the dilemmas we face in pedagogy, and educators can no longer permit a one-system approach for all learners. Ensuring the most appropriate manner of engagement for student learning, and growth, requires teachers to constantly redefine the intentions of education. As teachers grapple to better understand the more human aspects of the educational enterprise, the *very place* of school comes into question. The literature is grouped around the following themes that specifically address school as place: the rediscovery of place in education, the notion of place in our worldview, and the developing of an outdoor place in pedagogy.

Rediscovery of Place in Pedagogy

Leo-Nyquist and Theobald (1997) argue that there is a paradigm shift in the field of rural education that moves away from emulating urban schools and towards *pedagogy of place*. This instructional change, described in "Toward a Pedagogy of Place: Finding Common Ground for Rural Researchers, Teacher Educators, and Practitioners," has shifted the notion of place for educational practice. The trend toward centralized, large-scale organizational models that has dominated school structures throughout North America during the last century has influenced educators to come to accept as a necessary counter trend the rediscovery of the unique features of rural and small schools. The unique features of rural education are seen as strengths to be nurtured, not problems to be solved. Educators in rural schools are perhaps more inclined to recognize the importance of environmental sensitivity. A new appreciation for rural places has grown in response to past models that were often destructive of educational practice. Leo-Nyquist and Theobald acknowledge the role of teachers as gatekeepers of change within classrooms, the centrality of rural schools within their communities, and the many distinctive features of revitalized rural schools as essential elements of educational reform. Although they do not extend the study to include the teacher outside of the classroom, they do emphasize the connection of the classroom with the community through service learning and environmental education programs based on the study and stewardship of local ecosystems. The importance of their work rests with the idea of rural teachers as producers of curricula that are appropriate to their particular needs and contexts. This could potentially open curricular design to adopt a more outdoor-centered approach to the curriculum-as-planned.

Perez, Fain, and Slater (2004) in "Pedagogy of Place: Seeing Space as Cultural Education" have affirmed the importance of place in modern schooling practice for North American students. The work of Perez et al. position that place is something to be discovered for pedagogical purposes. However, Knapp and Woodhouse (2000) observe that place-based education is a relatively new term, but progressive educators have promoted the underlying concept for over 100 years. Place-based education usually includes conventional outdoor education and experiential methodologies, such as those advocated by John Dewey, to help students connect with their unique context in the world. In "Place-Based Curriculum and Instruction: Outdoor and Environmental Education Approaches," Knapp and Woodhouse review place-based curriculum and instruction as it relates to outdoor and environmental education. They provide examples of K–12 resources and programs, but not the concrete moments of teachers engaged in an outdoor practice. The work identifies the purposes of outdoor education, environmental education, and place-based education. Additionally, the intersecting and overlapping concepts in the literature—community-oriented schooling, ecological education, bioregional education, ecoliteracy, and ecological identity—are revealed as a nexus for a pedagogy of place. Knapp and Woodhouse, however, do not consider the essential characteristics of place-based education. These more natural attributes inevitably emerge from the particular uniqueness of a place. Thus the student experiences an inherently broader connection of self to place and to community. This study is critical for my research, in that it contrasts the work-oriented goals of schooling with place-based education that prepares people to live, work, and learn outside the school.

Place as Worldview in Schooling

By contrasting and comparing the educational practices of inside instruction to outside methods, differences and similarities emerge. However, more unique elements could be identified by examining teaching when it is removed from the context of school as a whole. In a distinct study "Education Indigenous to Place: Western Science Meets Native Reality," Barnhardt and Kawagley (1997) demonstrate that Indigenous peoples throughout the world have sustained their unique worldviews and associated knowledge systems for millennia. Many of the core values, beliefs, and practices associated with their worldviews have an adaptive integrity that is as valid today as it was in the past. However, traditional educational processes that seek to disseminate Indigenous beliefs and practices have frequently conflicted with formalized Western schooling and its worldview. Their study examines the relationships between Native ways of knowing, Western science, and formalized schooling in order to establish a basis for an education system that is respectful of the philosophical and pedagogical foundations within both cultural traditions. Drawing from the Alaskan Native context, Barnhardt and Kawagley have illustrated emerging issues that reconnect education to a sense of place. They present vignettes of lived experiences that depict learning and teaching, but not within a traditional school context. The instruction was specific to wildlife and ecology issues, and the participants within the study were members of a cross-cultural immersion program for non-Native educators. The classroom was a remote camp that positioned Native elders as instructors. The educational applications for my study is its glimpse into how Indigenous views are taught, but within a learning place outside that is an everyday learning and teaching experience for the Indigenous peoples.

Developing Pedagogy in an Outside Place

In his "Cooperative Ecology and Place: Development of a Pedagogy of Place Curriculum," Lewicki's (1998) formalized the notion of a "pedagogy of place" by establishing the major tenets of this educational consideration. He posits that nature teaching (teaching of nature and in natural settings) and one's understanding of place is indispensable to community awareness, and that where and how a student learns is critical to the relevance of the curriculum. Lewicki explores the potential of environmental literacy, and asserts that the development of environmentally grounded students should begin close to home.

Lewicki (1998) believes people's affinity for home, community, and school can encourage and provide connections between the student and the land. This pedagogy of place concerns the school connection to the surrounding outside world; but, as I mentioned earlier, the teacher is still the gatekeeper of reform. Lewicki's work also neglects to explain how a teacher experiences this pedagogy of an outside place. Still needed is an explanation of how the outside-pedagogical experience is lived by the teacher. A teacher's view could enable researchers to see how ecological principles (such as climate, symbiosis, succession, niche, and community) may apply to humans, school, curriculum, and students as teaching experiences. This pedagogical approach opens the school as a place that is committed to civic responsibility. However, Lewicki's focus is limited to how students learn to balance the rights of individuals and the ecological rights of place within the larger civic order.

This evolving paradigm shift in the place education is understandable, considering that rural schools are beginning to utilize the greatest teaching resource at their disposal—the surrounding outdoors, the community, and the natural world. Legualt (1991) describes an approach to wilderness education that facilitates an on-going dialogue between students and elements of nature. In his study, the students, over a period of 7–10 days, were guided in intimate interactions with the elements of nature through body movement. Supporting this educational experience were daily activities that involved meditation, sensory activities, kinaesthetic activities, and dance. These activities allowed students to encounter the natural element. The entirety of the daily wilderness experience was captured by the use of symbolic drawing and writing in a daily personal journal, which allowed students to explore the theme of self-identification with nature. Legualt uses methods of self-reporting, interviewing, and participant observation to get at the essence of the nature experience. Most importantly, Legualt's phenomenological study shows that the meanings that students construct differ in relation to the natural setting. This possesses phenomenological relevance to my study, but it nevertheless falls short of an adequate exploration of the experiential dimensions of the teacher's outside experience in a natural setting.

Qualitative methodology proves to be indispensable in revealing the learning implications that are accessible through outside experience in an outside space. It is an improved self-concept (Davidson, 2001) that strongly emerges from being-in-the-outdoors. Davidson's study focused on ten New Zealand male secondary students, aged 17–19, and made meaning of their outdoor educational experiences. His method of research used participant observation and in-depth interviews to explore how the outdoor students experienced positive freedom, intrinsic motivation, and a capacity for self-determination. Considering that the study's focus is on student outcomes, many insights may surface from these documented sources. Still, there are other sources to help expose the meaning dimensions of the outside teaching experience. One important source in need or further research attention is that of the educator.

The Outside Teacher

Going outdoors is a simple act; one that is performed countless times every day. The simplicity of this taken-for-granted action becomes complex when children are following at the heel of the teacher. The following themes from the literature I reviewed focused my attention to the experiential moment when teachers take children outside. From the literature in the next two sections I ask: What motivates teachers to step outside their schools? What are the roles of the outside teacher?

Teachers Stepping Outside

Phenomenological insights into the lifeworld of the outside teacher may not be limited to a standard practice of traditional-outdoor education. In this thesis activities that involve teachers have included field trips as a curricular-pedagogical experience; this is the most common practice by which schools take instruction outside. Jakubowski's (2003) article, "Beyond Book Learning: Cultivating the Pedagogy of Experience Through Field Trips," is a promising source for exploring the meaning of outside teaching. The field trip can show researchers a dimension of the lived experience of teachers who explore pedagogical practices focused on the curriculum, but do so outside.

Haluza-DeLay (2001) presents ways of awakening urban youth to the presence of the natural world in the city. He hoped that fostering the students' sense of stewardship toward their own place would occur. Still in the forefront of my questioning is how the teachers experienced their students' awakening. One source I included in my study was teachers who integrate community resources and local contexts into curriculum and instruction.

Similar to Haluza-DeLay, Arroz, et al. (2001) present teacher vignettes of the educative struggle to incorporate the community as a place of learning for students, and the planning challenges experienced by teachers. In a more difficult and philosophical source, Wohlgemut (2000) utilizes Heidegger's analyses of humans' being-in-the-world to deconstruct teachers' current technological outlook on the world. The importance of this work is that Wohlgemut offers an alternative concept of dwelling-in-a-place. The alternative teaching environment (the outdoors) is intimately linked with how outdoor educators are seeking to cultivate an environmental ethic among students. The challenge

Wohlgemut offers is in creating a space where all participants can become attuned to the world and consider their possibilities of dwelling-in-the-world.

Another influential source is Brown's (2000) account, titled *Words in the Wilderness: Critical Literacy in the Borderlands*. He relates a Caucasian teacher's experiences in an Athabascan village in Alaska. This is a portrayal of a teacher's attempt to theorize pedagogy in a real-world situation. Similarly, van Manen (1982) explored the meaning of pedagogy as an encounter, relationship, or action within an educational context. He concluded with a discussion about how phenomenology assists researchers to explain pedagogy in adults' relationships with children. Brown attempts to make meaning from this relational encounter. The teacher's narrative captures many lived experiences and explains the educational progression involved in becoming a bush teacher outside the traditional school. Brown describes complex classroom dynamics in which some students resisted the dominant culture, some were alienated from Native culture, and others were marginalized from both.

The narrative of the book presents the pedagogical relationship in the outdoors as a growing acknowledgement of his students and their competence of "natural-world knowledge." The reader is able to explore the lifeworld of a teacher and his students who are engaged in a Foxfire-style (see Wigginton, 1972), outdoor, culture-based project. The book culminates in the presentation of a teacher's examined journey of self-discovery and realization. The important discovery for my study is that this teacher's role more effectively serves the interests and needs of the marginalized Native learner by moving outside the traditional schooling concept. The narratives of Brown's experiences as a teacher in the bush can provide a necessary and valued phenomenological insight into the lifeworld of teaching outside. The limitation of this work is that Brown's narratives are based on a more traditional concept in outdoor education: *being in the bush*.

Brown's (2000) insight into the lifeworld of an outside teacher is long overdue. A symposium sponsored by the Coalition for Education in the Outdoors (CEO) presents a report of networked institutions, organizations, agencies, businesses, and associations that support outdoor education (Henderson, 1992). The CEO symposium provides current and applicable literature reviews and field-research reports related to outdoor educational practices, complete with recommendations for future research. Included in the report is a recommendation for the articulation of a phenomenology of wilderness experience and human development as a part of outdoor-educational programming. The notion of phenomenology as a research method for outdoor and experiential educational practices is not a unique or distant concept. Rosenblatt and Bartlett (1976) relate the psychological dynamics of "peak experiences" in outdoor education to two concepts, intentionality and paradoxical intention. Rosenblatt and Bartlett's examination takes place within the philosophical orientation of phenomenology. The authors explore the applications of the early philosophical theories of self, using Kant and Hume. They further the philosophic understanding of the peak experience as an integral part of the adventure in outdoor education and experiential education by comparing it to the experiential emphasis found in Husserlian phenomenology.

The practice of experiential education includes, and assumes, a notion of what is referred to as adventure education, and inherent in the use of the word *adventure* is risk. Smith (1989, 1998) uses the playground as a reference point for a phenomenological examination of adult perceptions of risk in children's lives and the development of pedagogy of risk. Smith defines risk and discusses the use of anecdotes as a methodological device in cultivating a phenomenological understanding of risk as challenge and adventure. He leads the reader to a constant questioning of adults' relationships with children. Smith posits that we, as educators, can enable children to take risks in relative safety. He challenges educators to refocus on the educational implications of risk. This is achieved by applying pedagogy to the everyday situations of children and their learning. Apart from the work done by Smith, however, there is little in the way of a phenomenological examination of the outside pedagogical experience, and Smith's work also skirts the lifeworld of the educator.

The Role of the Outside Teacher

Outdoor education is a general term that describes the use of resources outside the classroom and has long been considered a method to improve student learning (Knapp, 1996). In *Just Beyond the Classroom: Community Adventures for Interdisciplinary Learning,* Knapp aims to create a bridge between current school reform efforts and the field of outdoor education. He considers the implications of recent innovations in experiential education and mainstream learning. The innovations he examines include service learning (community-based education outside of the school), children's museums (field trips), constructivism (outside the classroom), and problem-based learning that incorporates an authentic learning approach. Planning for outdoor learning experiences requires an explanation of the role of the teacher in student-centered learning. Knapp's pedagogy provides an outline of a learning adventure model, not a revelation of the lived experience of a teacher leaving the school to teach. Knapp urges educators to include outdoor adventures that encourage teachers to move instruction into the community. The technical aspects of adventure outside the classroom seek to address an organization problem, background, outcomes, activities, reflection questions, and performance assessments. Missing from the adventure model is any explanation of what teachers could expect, other teachers' experiences to learn from, and the important phenomenological showing of the outside lifeworld of the teacher.

Regardless of specific research about the teacher's outside experience, programs continue to develop and experiential education continues to extend the boundaries of what most people consider to be school. Hagler (1998) documents the evolution of The Galileo Outdoor Adventures Program (GOAPe). This program addresses the needs of high-school students with a student-centered experiential program that is project– and community–based. The program is a semester-long instructional course that takes place in a public school in inner city San Francisco. A similar course, which I taught and primarily researched (Foran, 2001), seeks to advance the experiential practices of educators. The course, ABEL (Adventure Based Experiential Learning), is based in Hubley, Nova Scotia. Both the GOAPe and ABEL courses have students who are aged 15 and older. The students are actively involved in the planning, implementation, and outcomes of a series of projects and experiential activities that combine real-world learning with traditional schooling. Both programs are housed within a conventional-school setting. Students are actively engaged in numerous adventurous team-building and personal-growth initiatives. Once students have developed leadership skills, students are then challenged to visit possible service sites for the creation and completion of community-based service learning projects. After learning the specific skills needed, students participate in wilderness expeditions where they are responsible (in teams) for their own daily needs and the well being of others within their class. This type of outside-pedagogy takes place away from the school setting, but neither study provides a phenomenological view of the teachers' lifeworld in teaching beyond the school walls.

A source of research examined for outside teaching experiences is in the field of service learning. This growing area of educational practice has encouraged numerous teachers to take their curricular outcomes into the community, away from the traditional educational approach. Couto (1994) in "Teaching Democracy Through Experiential Education: Bringing the Community into the Classroom," presents an experiential education curricular model that focuses on service learning as a possible pedagogy for teaching democracy. His work situates a rationale for teaching democracy through service learning and provides general and specific guidelines for accomplishing that goal. His political model, however, does not contain narrative material that could illustrate the teachers' experience in a community-based setting. He does offer various models of service learning that teachers could incorporate into classroom assignments and other parts of the curriculum.

Advances in service learning were established in a more recent series of research findings (Billig & Furco, 2002). The publishing of a set of comprehensive research volumes that present and discuss a wide range of issues in the broad field of service learning opened the classroom to more curricular experiences outside the school. Billig and Furco define service learning as a

> multifaceted pedagogy that crosses all levels of schooling, has potential relevance to all academic and professional disciplines, is connected to a range of dynamic

> social issues, and operates within a broad range of community contexts. In terms of research, there is much terrain to cover before a full understanding of service learning can be achieved. (Billig and Furco 2002, p. vii)

Billig and Furco explore various themes and issues in community-based teaching. They offer practical answers for educators. However, while this work may offer a clearer understanding of the essence of service learning, it overlooks concrete moments of teachers immersed within a pedagogical enterprise outside the school. This otherwise comprehensive work captures the broad range of topics surrounding this form of community-based education. Billig and Furco also tackle a variety of research issues on service learning in K–12 education, teacher education, and higher education. The purpose of their research is to explore definitional foundations of service learning, theoretical issues relevant to service learning, the impacts of service learning, and methodological approaches to studying service learning. Phenomenology is absent from their collective approach, and the specific focus on the teacher's lived experience is disturbingly absent as well.

By exploring the emerging practices in community-curricular instruction, the literature of service learning has highlighted areas to consider and explore. As an example, Anderson, Swick, and Yff (2001) have compiled challenging research in *Service-Learning in Teacher Education: Enhancing the Growth of New Teachers, Their Students, and Communities*. Their work offers insights for teacher education in the conceptual and direct application areas of service learning. This collection of papers offers teacher educators' thoughts on how to enhance service learning as an educational practice, and on the usefulness of service learning in preservice teacher preparation.

Preservice and practicing teachers may provide experiential data on their concerns, experiences, and thoughts about going out into the community as a part of their curricular instruction. Anderson et al.'s study presents a wide range of lived experiences that help capture the essence of teaching outside the school. They present specific case studies on service learning that are directly related to teacher education programs. Their work examines the administrative and organizational issues surrounding the teaching of service learning, and they include tools for teaching service learning. The case studies themselves contain concrete lived descriptions to provide an inside view of teaching children outside the school.

Implications of the Research Literature

From the research sources, I observe that a concrete understanding of the teachers' experience of outdoor teaching is lacking. From a phenomenological perspective it is ironical that the literature of experiential learning is not very pedagogical, nor phenomenological. Yet, all the above sources have been valuable to me for conducting this study to provide direction, comparisons for my teacher interviews, as sources of thematic threads to explore, and as constant orientation in my reflective rewriting. Each source has the potential to open up the perception of classrooms to the outside world. The studies that contain teacher experiences offer inroads to the inside world of teaching beyond the classroom. These glimpses of the teaching world, however, only guided my study as I sought to capture a phenomenological portrayal of the outside teaching experience. A few of the studies listed above allude to a phenomenological orientation, but are unsuccessful in presenting the outside lifeworld in teaching as *recognizable*. Thus there is a gap in outdoor research—the pedagogical significance in teaching outside the school. I find this absence of phenomenology ironic due to the fact that experiential education, outdoor education, adventure education, and community-based programs are rooted in the assumption of understanding the role of direct experiences in learning. The research methodology of phenomenology is well-suited to exploring the meaning of outside experiences because of its specific focus on lived experiences in the human sciences.

My interviews in this thesis provide phenomenological data that centers on the outside teaching experience, and help fill the observed gaps in the literature I reviewed. Through analyzing the interview data, reviewing of the literature, examining relevant literary sources, several distinct themes surfaced from reflecting on the lived-experiences. The themes were evidenced not only from the conversations with teachers, but also from the contents of the various literary sources.

The thesis structure of chapters 6 through 10 presents the themes in the form of "Curriculum of." Each chapter deeply explores the complexities of a theme, the depth of meanings that are possible from each theme, and presents the anecdotes that are central to the uniqueness of the theme. There is overlap within the structure, but for illustrative purposes, I have decided to place each anecdote within the chapter that best reflects the theme. Throughout these chapters I reflect hermeneutically on the text that shows the phenomena of teaching outside. But first, in the next chapter, I explain how I analyzed the stories of teaching outside and grounded this study phenomenologically into "curriculum of" themes.

CHAPTER 5

STORIES FROM OUTSIDE

Much of teachers' and students' understanding of the world is based on an inside practice: textbooks, TV, media, or the Internet. When people begin a quest, many turn to dominant, inside sources of information before heading outdoors. For instance, when I wanted to take my boys fishing for the first time, I needed to learn how to tie a fishing knot that would keep the hook attached to the line. Without thinking I quickly turned to the Internet. The teachers I conversed with about this thesis expressed a similar practice: they, too, were somehow bound by artificial conduits to the outside world—providing an educational bridge.

The vision that took form in my mind was one in which teachers, like Grover in the story of a museum experience entitled *Grover and the Everything in the Whole Wide World Museum* (Stiles, Wilcox, & Mathieu, 1974), seek out what the world can offer. As teachers explained their role to me, I could see them standing in the hallway of the museum and, like Grover, declare: "You know, I have seen many things in this museum, but I still have not seen everything in the whole wide world. Where did they put everything else?" (Stiles, et al., p. 24). I see these teachers standing with Grover in front of two big doors topped by a banner that boldly reveals, "EVERYTHING ELSE." I can hear the collective "Aha!" And then Grover opens the door for us so that we can discover that beyond this door is an egress from the museum that leads us to the "whole wide world." The last page of the book affirms my vision of the outside teacher, as Grover leads the way, exclaiming, "Look at this! Buildings! Bushes! Windows! Mountains!" (Stiles et al., p. 26). Grover exemplifies the innocent wonder of going outside. He reminds us that going outdoors, for many of us, could be an act in our relationship with the world that is merely taken for granted. In the story, Grover is alone; we only follow in our imaginations as our minds begin to look at all the possibilities that wait for us out there. I wonder if Grover's exuberance as he heads outside would differ if a group of school children were tagging along.

As a teacher, I identify with Grover's curiosity with and excitement about seeking worldly discoveries. Yet the experience is different for teachers. Pedagogy complicates the simplicity of going out doors. One teacher went so far as to interpret the role of an outdoor teacher as a gatekeeper that channels students from inner-school worlds to the outer world as they seek unseen but imagined experiences, and discover possibilities that lie just around the bend (see Figure 6) and entice us to explore and travel a smidge farther. I am encouraged, in this regard, by Graham Bell's (MacBeath, 2004) "Message to Children:"

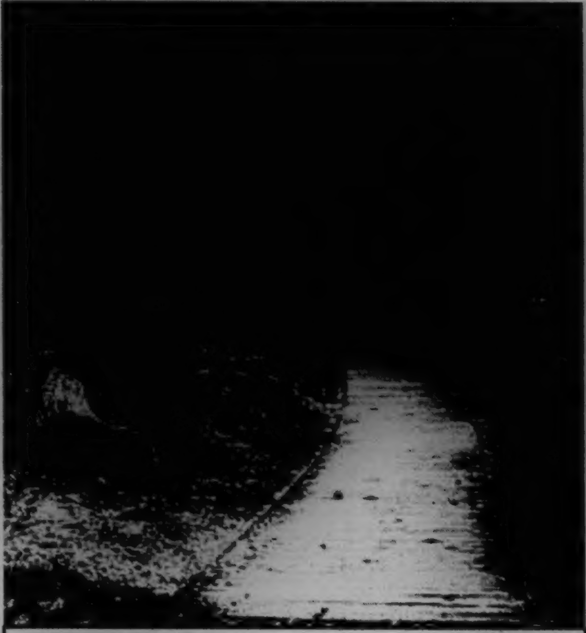

Figure 6: A bend in a school trail that leads to an outside teaching space. Photograph by A. Foran.

> Don't keep forever on the public road, going only where others have gone. Leave the beaten track occasionally and dive into the woods. You will be certain to find something you have never seen before. Of course, it will be a little thing, but do not ignore it; follow it up, explore all around it; one discovery will lead to another, and before long you will have something worth thinking about. (p. 103).

Conjoined with this role of leading students beyond the known gate must be a sense of responsibility that overwhelms the foundation of the inside teaching experience. Outside is a risky place for people—not just at the level of safety, but on emotional and spiritual levels. Bilbo Baggins reminds me that stepping outside my front door is risky business (see Tolkien, 2000).

However, both *connotation* and *denotation* benefits can be reaped when the outdoors is included within the practice of educating children. It is these benefits that I hope to capture as I share these outside-pedagogical experiences. The first part of this chapter is an introduction to the phenomenological qualities that underlie my study, and the grounding of phenomenological anecdotes that position the subsequent, thematic chapters under representative headings: *Curriculum of* (see Norris, 2001). These anecdotes are best understood as *currere*.

Currere

The meaning I attribute to curriculum, as explored in the chapters identified as *Curriculum of*, is not limited to subject specialization. Rather, I embrace the holistic possibility of *currere*. To gain insight into that critical element of *currere*—that is, to understand the self through reflection (Slattery, 1995)—we must as teachers tell our own stories as part of the curriculum. Teachers can improve the quality of curriculum by means of theoretical advancement that develops their self-portraits, which contain the experiences, myths, dreams, and creative imagination of teaching. It is through relaying our experiences that we can shape our practices; thus plausible for teachers to understand curriculum as a strategy that transforms experiences into useable knowledge. Therefore, understanding our own autobiographies/biographies helps us develop our practices so they are responsive to the needs of students and ourselves. Journeying to create individual meaning from curriculum allows teachers to understand their world, and this includes the outside teaching world.

This thesis has become my reflective understanding of my teaching world. It combines a biographic collaboration of other teachers' reflections and my autobiographical investigation of praxis (see Pinar, 1994). Being self-reflective and finding voices for our experiences allows us to make meaning from our *currere*. I must reiterate that an outdoor practice tends to remain on the boundaries of normative teaching practice. Noddings (1986) states that research stems from a common community goal, wherein participants view themselves as involved members. *Currere* is an effort to make sense of the contributions that academics, student-teacher subject experiences, and the system's policies have on the everyday life of individuals. This work is an extension of that educational community so it might include instructional practices that are at times marginalized and on the educational fringes—experiences outside the school. *Currere* becomes the method for self-actualization. Finding my own voice and guiding others in this search has helped me establish my awareness of my personal identity as an educator who includes the outside in my teaching practice. I have found significant meaning in an outside practice as a pedagogical experience.

I believe teachers must never lose sight of their own stories, because as outside teachers we, too, contribute to curriculum; when stories are shared, we have a profound role in shaping the multiple *connotation* and *denotation* threads of curriculum that are part of the educational world. However, just because we have outside teaching experiences does not guarantee we achieve self-understanding as teachers. Experiences become meaningful when reflected upon (Grumet, 1976a). To find our identities as teachers we need to tell our stories in a self-reflective process (see Silvers, 1984).

Heeding Derridia's (2001) message, teachers need to go inward to make sense of their educational journey, and they need to share their experiences so that others may learn from them (Macdonald, 1974; Pinar, 1974). Curriculum becomes the process through which students and the teacher can grow within the system. For Aoki (1990), the pedagogical relationship becomes an opportunity in which the "educator and the educated are allowed to dwell in a present that embraces past experiences and is open to possibilities yet to be" (p. 114). By understanding one's own identity, a teacher is better prepared to understand why he or she wants to move in a particular direction that is connected to curriculum development. Connected knowing (Helle, 1991) creates the language that transforms private reflection into public understanding and, for this thesis, a language that captures the outside experience pedagogically. Grumet (1976b) articulates *currere* in the following way: it "is what the individual does with the curriculum, his [sic] active reconstruction of his passage through its social, intellectual, physical structures" (p. 111), which he achieves through reflection and interpretation.

The reflective biographical stories collected from invited teachers reveal the degree to which this experiential teaching approach helped them to make connections with their *currere*. *Currere* is a method and theory of curriculum that transcends educational and social science research by focusing on the educational experience of the individual, as told by the individual, to reveal what the participant understands of the events (Grumet, 1976a). Grumet (1976b) states *currere* is a reflexive cycle "in which thought bends back upon itself and thus recovers its volition" (pp. 130–131). Thus *currere* becomes a research "strategy devised to disclose experience, so that we may see more of it and see more clearly" (Pinar & Grumet, 1976, p. vii). This complements the phenomenological aim of this study—*by showing*. In short, *currere* comprises curricular meanings gleaned from participants' connected understanding (Pinar, 1994). What did the teachers experience during their outside engagement with children? What is unique about the outside teaching experience? More specifically, I believe this research points to the teachers' "here and now" (see Merleau-Ponty, 1962) during pedagogical moments outside. Furthermore, examination of this phenomenon can reveal the impacts it makes on teacher education as we continue to develop pedagogy that transcends the inside worlds of education.

In seeking a practical self-understanding of outside experiences, I gained a strengthened theoretical connection to the teacher's place in an outside teaching world. The deployment of a phenomenological method to examine teacher *currere* involved an individualized examination of an outside teaching practice and the shared educational experiences of each teacher. The experiences, as relayed by the teachers, were captured in reflective texts that focused on what the individuals understood to be their respective outside educational journeys. Their reflections are consistent with Pinar et al.'s (1996) dictum: "grounded in context … depict and comprehend … the subject's past upon the educational experience of the individual in the present" (p. 416). Huebner (1975) considers such reflection to be a valuable activity for educational curriculum. He explains it as follows: "The fullness of the educational activity, as students encounter each other, the world around them, and the teacher, is all there is. The educational activity is life—and life's meanings are witnessed and lived in the classroom" (pp. 227–228). The fullness of the activity, I propose, is only attainable when the reader relives the outside moment as experienced by each teacher.

The Concrete Grounding of the Study

To investigate the pedagogical significance of teaching experiences for teachers outside the school, I draw upon a classic orientation of phenomenology. This focus is on the experiential moments from the lifeworld of teachers relevant to four existential qualities. Each lived experience was open to the reflective questioning of outdoor teaching experiences, guided by considerations of the existentials of spatiality, corporeality, temporality, and relationality—four dimensions of the lifeworld identified by van Manen (1997). These four lifeworld themes provide a concrete grounding for the lived experience, and they have guided me in human-experience reflection. Phenomenology is the showing of human phenomena, and an examination of these four existentials provides a universal connection to the lifeworld of teachers outside the school. The existentials assisted my reflective writing by prompting continual phenomenological questioning: through re-writing, I have sought to construct a phenomenologically insightful study. Such reflecting and rewriting is a process advocated in phenomenological research by van Manen (2002b).

The four existentials have consistently served to focus my attention on the central question of my study. The existentials helped me to attend to the lived experience within each of the anecdotes by anchoring my study to experience rather than argument, empirical fact, or philosophic explanation. The concern here, for me as researcher, has been to achieve the recognizability of possible human experiences. The aim is to bring the reader as close as possible to the lived experiences of teachers who are engaged with children outside the school. As an outdoor educator working within a school, I, too, have reflected on the participants' lived experiences and how they strengthen or contradict the data of my own experiences and literary sources.

Follow Me

The following anecdotes are explored phenomenologically and are pedagogically significant in that serve to situate the importance the outdoors has for this study. These stories are not provided for the sake of argument, debate, or educational proof; instead, they provide a familiarity with and integration of the four existentials. The lived experience descriptions serve as an introduction and will also help the reader, I trust, to better understand the contexts for the anecdotes shared by other teachers embedded in each chapter as a ***curriculum of*** (Norris, 2001). Furthermore, the following anecdotes help to facilitate for the reader the importance of an outside place and the influence this has pedagogically for teachers.

Spatiality: Space and Place

> I did not want to waste another minute inside. They followed me down the hallway laughing, scrambling; it was all so exciting. It was like they had never been outdoors before, or I, for that matter. When I reached the front door I froze. I could hear them behind me and I could see the brightness, the sun forcing its way through the little square opening. I started to laugh inside, but I know it was a nervous laugh. Then I came face to face with the door. My spontaneity took a turn. Just what was I doing? Would this work? Am I allowed to do this? I think I was afraid, of what, I do not know. I was flooded with *what if* questions. I almost turned around and said, "Back to the class! This is not right!" But I didn't. I pushed the bar and went straight out. As I looked around I remember whispering a line from Dr. Seuss, "It's opener there in the wide open air" (see Figure 7). And then they came pouring out behind me. For some reason I had this shadow of doubt hanging over my head despite the brilliant afternoon. (Jay, Career and Life Management teacher)

Figure 7: The open aspect of outside space. Photograph by A. Foran.

I am curious why the teacher had a sense of doubt at the door before leading the class to an outside place. When our classrooms open up, does the teaching place become scary? One would think that for instructional purposes teaching outside would be similar to indoor instruction. Does pedagogy change when our places change? In discussing places, one may ask how a place is like or unlike other places to learn about its uniqueness. By describing a particular place, one attempts to describe what it is like to be there. Hoad (1986) traces how the concept of place emerged in the 12th century from the Old French— *place*—from Medieval Latin— *placea* "place, spot," the Latin *platea*, or "courtyard, or broad street," and the ancient Greeks' reference to *plateia (hodos)*, "broad (way)" (p. 355). Old French *espace* is rooted in Latin *spatium*. In the 13th century it was understood to be "an area, extent, expanse" (Hoad, p. 451). However, it is important to note that the Latin *spatium* extends the meaning of room, area, or distance to embrace the understanding of a stretch of time. Space comes to be understood in an astronomical sense (a non-Euclidean space defined by a mathematical set of elements or points that satisfy specified geometric postulates), and as the blank spaces that separate typed words or characters in textual print. In short, space is the infinite extension of the three-dimensional region in which all matter exists. Merleau-Ponty (1962) describes the understanding of spatiality as a unique human phenomenon that allows us to mediate our world. Is teaching outdoors a pedagogical act in a *space* or in a *place*? What does being outside mean today: outside a place, such as a school building, but within a space, such as the expanse the world has to offer for learning experiences?

From a phenomenological perspective, Merleau-Ponty (1962) situates space as "the form of external experience and the things given within that experience" (p. 283).

This challenges me to see space not as a setting that presents the "real," the "logical," or the "arrangement of things." Rather, space must be understood as "the means whereby the position of things becomes possible" (p. 284). It is through understanding the possible that one will advance pedagogy and teaching in an outside space. Phenomenologically, it is important to be open to the experience of space and the knowledge that is connected to it. For the lived experience to be fully understood, researchers "cannot take the world and orientated space as a given along with the contents of sense experience or with the body in itself" (p. 288). Furthermore, humans, as orientated beings, tend to "cast an anchor in some" established setting, and the phenomenal "place" is designated "by the task and situation. [One's] body is wherever there is something to be done" (p. 291). The task and action of this study is to gain insight into a "body" engaged in teaching, but in an outdoor place, experiencing the space of the world. Merleau-Ponty encourages us to break from our human settings, to take our unknowing bodies and attune ourselves to a primordial world, a taken-for-granted world, for all our experiences are acquired spatiality (p. 295).

What did Jay, the teacher in the previous anecdote, experience at that moment of hesitation as he looked out from the inside of the doorway? His hands would have been touching, feeling the cool aluminum release bar common to school doors. I am curious to understand the cause of his hesitation, for "being-in-the-world" is a natural state of existence even in an outside space. I am sure the teacher has not forgotten how "to-be-in-the-outside-world." The hesitation may be engendered and constrained by the association of class occurring outside as somehow unnatural to conventional instruction. The effectiveness of this study requires that I act upon the simple notion of leading a group of students outside and, like Husserl, "stand in wonder before the world" (Fink, 1933, p. 350)—the world outside.

Temporality: Watching the Clock on the Wall

> I couldn't believe it when the kids were telling me that we had to go. I still do not know what had happened to the allotted ninety minutes. I lost all track of the time, and from where we were I couldn't hear the bell. I loved it! No annoying interruptions, no bells! Just me, my class, and piles of sifted soils. We spent our time making little individual piles of sand. There we were, looming and screening under a blazing sun, oblivious to the goings on around us. There were no reminders, interruptions, and no schedule, just piles of glacial sand, the till of the past. We had time. (Leslie, Geography teacher)

How did the teacher in the last anecdote experience time? Some seem to think that to be outside is to experience a temporal speeding up. Some claim that time ceases to exist outside. Did time creep like the glacier that created the very glacial till being sifted by the class? Is it possible to have school without the buzzer, the commanding schedule of offered classes, and the clock on the wall? For the ancient Greeks, two concepts served to explain time: *Kronos* was understood as work time, and *kairos* as play time (kairos or chron*illogical* time, free-time, and transcendent time, juxtaposed to kronos, or chronological time that is structured hour-to-hour or, literally, day-to-day) (Harper, 2001). Kairos is time that flows like water; it is pure time, natural (see Figure 8), ungoverned, and free. Today, most of us are governed by an imposed or adopted artificial measure of industrial-structured time. The teacher sifting soil indicated that time seemed to change—that the class experience was different outside. As teachers, we can teach without the clock on the wall, and schools—as places—could still operate, but I do not believe we can escape or exist without time. How, then, can blocks of class time change because lessons are conducted outside? As van den Berg (1970) points out, there are places in the world where time can be forgotten, and a person can gain a sensation of freedom: "One would forget all about the world here" (p. 102). Has the outside teacher, above, experienced van den Berg's freedom, and does this prompt the expressed love for being outdoors? Time can imprison, trap, or oppress those who witness the passage of time on the face of a clock when escape from its hold on our temporal relation to the world is impossible. When I extend this notion to the relationships in schools, where—as a place, as an institution—time is the omnipotent factor in the day, the march of time seems to be a constant force.

Figure 8: Clocks represent the act of watching time in the indoor world; outdoors, other temporal indicators are at play. Photograph by A. Foran.

Like van den Berg (1970), I, too, question time and what it means for teaching outside. In the outdoors we cannot passively sit and watch this march of time on a classroom wall. Rather, our boredom may bring us to vigilantly monitor the progress of our Timex watches instead. However, teaching outside somehow brings us into contact with a different sort of time, a primordial time not measured mechanistically. The experience of teaching outside, for me, is the sensation of a temporal hesitation that is prolonged—as van den Berg describes the second hand in the "moment of pause" at 12: "Each time this hand reaches the figure twelve, it stops for a moment as if to deliberate, and then it continues" (p. 103). Thus the measuring is not the experience of absolute time of the clock. It could be in the "pause" that we experience a world time, a real time. I must bear in mind that van den Berg witnessed his description of time from outdoors. He realized that somehow the clock's domination of time weakens in this outside place: it is obvious only to the keen observer who witnesses the path of the sun on its vertical plane, and the growth of shadows throughout the day.

Time regulates human activity, gives us structure and a schedule, but something happens to our grounding in a place when there is no clock on the wall. In the outdoors there are no walls to present the face of time. Outside the school we only have the path of the sun to remind us of our temporal reality, of our being-in-the-world. Inside school, we, as teachers, are always conscious of time, for there are ever-present reminders. We have the buzzer to begin the day, to mark the progress of the day in blocks of time, and to end the day of learning, replete with periodic announcements that remind us of our day's progression. I wonder did the teacher sifting the glacial till experience time in the same way that a teacher inside his or her classroom would? Does time influence the pedagogical element in teaching?

Perhaps, when one enters the outside, one exists in the real world where time cannot be artificially divided with the same precision as can be achieved inside. Therefore, the outside experience of teaching could be the experience of pedagogical limitlessness in time. Perhaps being inside is our human attempt to control the unlimitedness of time—because space is unlimited as well, and we control this abyss with our construction of places, like school buildings, that contain and dominate pedagogical lived experiences. Van den Berg (1970) is clear when he observes "each place has its own time" (p. 121). But what is time for the teacher outside school?

Corporeality: Finding a Place

Merleau-Ponty (1962) explains time as an ever-constant inner experience because all human experiences arrange themselves as a *before* and an *after* in temporality. For Merleau-Ponty, this is understood best as human bodies' experiences of the "flow" of time's passage, or the "course of time" (p. 477). An individual body is the nexus of the present as a "consequence of the past, and the future of the present" (p. 477). However, as Merleau-Ponty questions the realness of time as a process, he challenges the impressions of being-in-the-world as it is perceived by our primordial-body senses. What does a teaching body experience outside the classroom, and how does this differ from the inside-school experience of pedagogy?

> It's hard to put my finger on it. It's like I didn't belong. I wanted to be outside with them, but was this really the best place for us? I kept thinking, "Is this not better than being inside? Am I not making the curricular experience more real?" I know the kids were enjoying it. I was too. Sometimes I feel as if the classroom smothers us. I know I came alive outside, in some way. We were imagining that we were the first explorers pushing into the interior of a vast land that became Canada. I was reading the account from Pierre Gaultier de Varennes, sieur de La Vérendrye. I was watching the faces of my students as I was reading the passage. They

> were staring at the wood's path and the glint of shimmering water of the lake off to our left (see Figure 9). If it weren't for their faces I would have left. I now wonder if this *feeling of belonging* was what the explorers from years ago felt. What I want to know is why I feel so displaced when I take them out here. These woods are on school property, but I always feel like a trespasser. (Jody, History teacher)

How does a teacher outside of school, therefore, define a pedagogical practice? I find it interesting, almost puzzling, that a person can sense not belonging to a particular place that they normally inhabit. Was this teacher struggling to see this outside place as school? Jody may have realized that indoor teacher sensibilities may not have belonged outside and there was a need for a different way to be pedagogically present for the children. What would cause a body—and in this particular instance, the teacher's body—to sense this displacement in a person's own world? Is the body the *res extensa* of the Cartesian definition of *corpus*? Gadamer (2001) explains corporeality as an announcement—that is, when the function of the body is disrupted—

Figure 9: The experience of corporeality on a path. Photograph by A. Foran.

> as the disturbance of being given over to one's own being alive in sickness, discomfort, and so on. The conflict that is set up between natural bodily experience (that mysterious process in which well being and health go unnoticed)

> and the strain of keeping illness at bay through the process of objectification is experienced by everyone who is placed in the situation of the object …. It is an expression of the self-understanding of our modern medical science to render these disturbances, these insurrections against our corporeality. (p. 122)

Therefore, it could be that for the teacher the bodily experience of leaving the inside world is a disturbance to the *cogito*, the body. Gadamer's corporeal disruption could be accomplished in the pre-reflective experiential moment when a teacher steps outside the school. It could be possible for teachers, when stepping outside with their classes, to be "no longer concerned with [their] body, nor with time, nor with the world, as I experience them in ante-predicative knowledge, in the inner communion that I have with them" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 71).

As humans, the world is around us and inside us. We are part of the infinite world. My aim is to reveal this inner communion of students and the outdoors as experienced by the outside-teacher. Unveiling what the teacher lives through can provide insights for an outside-pedagogical practice. As Merleau-Ponty (1962) explains, "The world is not what I think, but what [I] live through. I am open to the world, I have no doubt that I am in communication with it, but I do not possess it; it is inexhaustible" (p. xvii). The teacher who is comfortable outside the school can provide important insights into the lived experience of the corporeal encounter with the outside world. An important comparison in this pedagogical experience is that between the teacher who is "at home" outdoors and the teacher who hesitated at the door, the teacher who sensed a "gulf" separating the inside world from the outside world, and the teacher who experienced a sense of displacement.

Gendlin (1988) brings attention to the issue of contextualization; the concept of how "we sense ourselves in situations" (p. 44). Gendlin explains that "we are always situated[:] in situations, in the world, in a context, living in a certain way with others, trying to achieve…. [l]iving in the world with others [as] living-in, and living-with" (p. 44). For Sartre (1984), the body is realized as an instrument—as a sphere of influence in which the body defines itself in relation to the chair on which it sits or the world on which it moves. Polanyi (1969) offers interpretations of experience in general terms and of how the body can be seen to have a relationship with every physical experience:

> Our body is the only assembly of things known almost exclusively by relying on our awareness of them for attending to something else…. Every time we make sense of the world, we rely on our tacit knowledge of impacts made by the world on our body and the complex responses of our body to these impacts. (pp. 147–148)

What can be learned from the tacit knowledge a teacher has while teaching outside? This knowledge rests in making sense of the physical experience of *being* in the outside world. An important discovery would be the ability to distinguish the source of one's disassociation, displacement, and the feelings of not belonging. It is significant to note that the teacher, in the end, remained outside and continued with the lesson of the early Canadian explorers, but only as a trespasser.

Relationality: Outdoor Pedagogy?

How does the relational aspect in pedagogy change as a result of teachers and students being outside? What happens to the pedagogical relationship when exposed to the outdoors? Some claim the relationship is heightened, strained, or different when compared to its enactment in the classroom. I am sure that pedagogy is neither exclusive to, nor restricted to, an inside classroom practice. It is important for this study to learn from outside teachers and to develop a pedagogical language that articulates and encompasses an outdoor pedagogy.

The word *agogos* is derived from the Greek notion of leading or guiding. When linked with the word *peda* or *paides*, meaning child, a literal reading of pedagogy would be to lead a child (Yale University Library, 2001). This is an etymologically rich image: a "watchful slave or guardian whose responsibility it was to lead" (van Manen, 1991, p. 37) children is a pedagogue. Projecting my imagination into the ancient world, I see the caring, sensitive relationship of a leader and a follower that is focused on the learning engagement. What is the educational result of the pedagogical focus in teaching outdoors? This educational experience is an invested personal process. The teacher-like figure leads children toward educational experiences of growth and to learning challenges. I envision an ancient, relational experience that was rich: a teacher who was fully there for the child. The pedagogical relationship is "teacher as leader," not the mere conveyor of knowledge. Teaching in the outdoors contradicts societal perceptions of the teacher's ability to control comfort, safety, security, and of course learning. Bringing children into the outdoors challenges the predictability, and therefore the certainty of expectations, of learning lessons out there. I am, as an outdoor educator, doing as Miller (1990) describes:

> seeking places that are physically difficult and demanding for travel, that present exacting but soluble problems, that give instantaneous reward for effort, that grant

> the opportunity for solitude, that allow the immersion in the unfamiliar and the unknown with the anxiety that these produce.… [Seeking] places where the illusion of total human control of nature is banished, places that engage the whole person—mind, body, and spirit—places that are pervaded by a sense of power, mystery, and awe. They go where there is danger but where the danger can be assessed and managed. They help students convert danger, fear, and anxiety into achievement. (p. 326)

It could very well be that implicit in the outdoor environment is uncertainty. However, in the outdoors, the teacher's relationship to the student—which is concerned with student growth, student risk, the excitement of hands-on learning, and the pedagogical distance of leading—allows the teacher only to watch, look, and hope. How is this different from the indoor teaching relationship?

Within outdoor education, my teaching practice seems to bring me close to the authenticity of the Greek intention of pedagogy. However, the nearness to the experience still presents an absence of the outside-teaching experience. What is the relationship of *agogos* with children, leading them to the experience, but outside the school? A concern is that leading children outdoors can become disharmonious to sound educational practice or even pedagogy itself. Outside the safety net of the school, one must face the frisson of the unknown. Learning is conducted under a constant gaze of vigilance that centres on the students' well-being. The act of stepping outside might bring the teacher face to face with the ugliness of fear. Perhaps fear can be an element that makes the outdoors alluring. The pull of the unknown can draw us, as humans, into a new world, a dynamic and exciting world, that cannot be controlled in the everyday existence as teachers. Fear, however, can prevent teachers from teaching to the fullest when outside; alternatively, it can enable students to learn while free of the indoors. Fear becomes elusive—a mystery to one's being. Is there a fear rooted in outdoor education that serves as a constant pathic connection? There is more than fear in the relational bond of pedagogy that exists between teacher and student outside school. Fear exists inside the classroom as well; however, outside the school, pedagogical connections seem to become intensified, to take on meaning that goes beyond the curriculum.

> I was squinting my eyes trying to figure out who would be coming out to the school's back-wood lot. I knew it wasn't a student; the necktie was blowing in the late October wind. As the figure approached I realized it was Mr. Fitzpatrick, my VP. I just could not imagine in my wildest dreams why he was joining my class. He was about 50 meters away when I got the wave for me to meet him in the grass before the ash and oak stands. As I approached I could see his face, it was grim. All I could think was something happened that must have affected one of my students in my class. As I closed in he asked, "What do you think you are doing?" I was stunned and unable to answer. He proceeded, "What are you doing out here?" I then understood the purpose of his visit. I tried to explain that a part of the biology unit is eco-tones and habitat systems. He cut me off with, "The next time you are going to do something like this, I want to know first." He then left to return to the school. As I walked back to my students, I was feeling empty. I wondered if other teachers had to let him know their curricular plans first. When I got back to the tree line the kids

> were all watching me; they must of known something was up (see Figure 10). It was in my face, for they asked the only sensible question, "Hey Sir, are you in trouble or something?" I was not sure. (Bobby, Biology teacher)

What prompted the VP to challenge this teacher? Was the sanctity of instruction violated when an entire class experienced school instruction outside? As a school leader, the VP is a teacher of teachers. From Bobby's account the students seemed to care about their teacher's circumstance; significant in this relational account is the students' perception of a change in their teacher engendered by the VP's visit. Does the outdoors attune us more to our relational connections to one another? How is this pedagogical element in teaching experienced by teachers? Van Manen (2006) reminds us that with pedagogy, as a teaching practice, it matters that the teacher is there for the students, not the other way around. Was the VP trying to be there for all his students? I wonder if the impromptu visit was fuelled by fear. Fear might be expected if control over a class, and a teacher, appeared threatened once they left the building's parameters. How has the outside become so removed from our being-in-the-outside world as teachers and learners?

Figure10: Children outdoors; the importance of group pictures in shared experiences. Photograph by A. Foran.

Curriculum of

The anecdotes throughout this thesis are from teachers engaged in an outdoor practice and, for the purposes of my thesis; these teachers are the authorities of their outside pedagogical experience. The meaning of *authority* within these lived experiences is simply to be "a recognized knowledge or expertise" (Thompson, 1996, p. 49). Hence the etymological notion of author is rooted in the word *authority* in the concept of "bringing forward" (Hoad, 1996). My role in this authorship is to show the phenomenological experience of teaching outside. In the following chapters, the anecdotes derive from field trips, single lessons, school programs, and from outdoor units. The anecdotes also cover a range of academics: biology, physical education, history, career and life management, earth sciences, and geography. The participants, who are really the coauthors, and their subject areas are as follows: Jody, a History 12 and Mi' Maq Studies 10 teacher; Jamie, an At-Risk Youth School Support program teacher; Bobby, a Biology 12 teacher and administrator; Jay, an Art and a Career and Life Management (CALM) teacher; Kelly, a Physical Education 11 and 12 teacher; Leslie, a Geography teacher; and Chris, an Earth Sciences teacher. The names of these teachers have been changed to ensure confidentiality, and no reference is made to the names of their schools. These teachers are all at different phases of their careers, some are nearing retirement and others are in the initial or mid-career range. The common connection for these teachers is their determination to use the outdoors as part of their practice.

Like a museum curator, I have organized the showing of the outside experiences so that they highlight dominant themes as *five curriculum of*. This presentation is not exhaustive. Rather, it is a representation of what these teachers experienced, paired with my own experiential reflections on teaching outside. Having extensive experience in the outdoors allowed me to reflect on each chapter on a meta-pedagogical level. Most importantly, these anecdotes capture the essence of the phenomenological thread as a lived experience. Hence each anecdote employed in this thesis was selected for its uniqueness and its vivid impact on the reader who must live the outside teaching experience from inside their imagination.

The thematic chapters are on display, so to speak, are as follows: freedom (awareness of self, pedagogy, and environment), intensity (a focus on risk and interactivity), realism (authentic moments, fear, and the natural world in learning), relationships (students and teachers bonding emotionally), and adventure (motivation and openness to the teachable moment). These chapters are presented as ***Curriculum of*** (Norris, 2001). Each chapter explores the textual representation of the meaning of teaching that occurs in an outside context, and at times, when appropriate, the inside world of teaching is used hermeneutically to make sense of the significance in the relational experience that can occur outdoors.

I have always been fascinated by the draw or call of the outdoors. I joke with students and teachers that I never seem to be able to find people who sit and stare into the indoors in the same way that many can sit for extended periods of time outdoors. I have yet to meet an individual who is staring through a pane of glass that is directed toward the inside world; I do not mean the shopper looking at *for sale* items or children taken by the temptations of chocolate in the bakery, or even the homeless seeking the warmth and security of the indoors. I can lose afternoons sitting at any window, looking out, living my life from a chair as I wallow and drift within thoughts or memories, or by dwelling in reflections. The outdoor teaching experience is diverse and unique, and this fact is best shown by the anecdotes that have been graciously shared by other outdoor educators. You, however, must go inside their stories to experience what leading pupils outside means. You will be able to align these outside experiences with your own outdoor adventures, reminiscences, or notable experiences. We do not exit the world to come indoors; we always exit the inside to go out (see Figure 11). Do we ever exit the world at our own risk, or is that reserved for entering at our own risk?

Figure 11: An exit sign leading out of a school. Photograph by A. Foran.

CHAPTER 6

CURRICULUM OF FREEDOM

I remember looking at my hands and seeing the stains, dirty streaks of the outdoors. I felt proud, for my hands had just built a bush shelter. Time slowed that day. The day was not broken with an artificial division of bells and schedules. When I peeked out of the shelter's doorway, I was overwhelmed with the brilliance. I had to squint to see the depths of green from the mixed conifers balancing the panoramic view from my new home. Something inside me swelled. I became a part of this landscape, but I was not alone. This knowing or connection was revealed to me when I was tying off my last piece of twine. I caught the eye of Samantha from across the gurgling brook that wound around the timeless old-growth maple (see Figure 12). It was in her eyes and smile—it was radiating from her face. I have never seen that expression in school! Her face revealed a beauty of learning. It was aesthetic and ethereal, a hint of what I dreamed teaching to be. I lived as a student in that look. I knew she wanted to say something. We just gave each other gentle nods as if sharing a secret. She noticed, no doubt, that I was as much of a student as she. I think she saw the child in my face, the

Figure 12: This is the brook in the outside area of Kelly's anecdotal description. Photograph by A. Foran.

> person in her teacher. There was innocence in our exchange that held meaning and significance. Out here we free to just be … people, not students, not teachers. I experienced a teaching moment that connected me to learning like no lesson I ever experienced. (Kelly, Physical Education teacher)

Tode Ti

Kelly shared a transformative moment that captures the relationship in a look. This anecdote is built on recognition that is mutual, between student and teacher. The recognition was made possible because of the outdoors, for according to Kelly, there was "freedom to be natural: more yourself and at ease." The outside space—free of the indoor-binding constraint—allowed the student and teacher to see something in each other—I see the child—the child sees the learner—we see innocence in learning. Does being outside the school allow the relationship to become more *with* or *beside* students in their learning? Learning alongside a student is possible indoors as well, but the outside experience lends a depth and richness to this pedagogical realization that is somehow beyond the in-class experience. Are students and teachers more free and better able to see each other as people when outdoors, in contrast to seeing the other as a role played—as merely students, or merely teachers—when indoors?

I am assured that what Kelly experienced that day in the woods was what Aristotle deemed *tode ti*: a true recognition of the individual that is presented only as shown, not in words (see Gadamer, 1998, p. 73). Could this shown element, in being, be the freedom of transformation when a person is discovering his or her identity, pedagogically, as a learner and a teacher? Was this freedom experienced because of the natural landscape—away from the institutional confinement of school—amidst the autonomy nature offered as learners? Kelly claims that day in the woods was a transformative moment in education. As humans we are naturally a part of nature, not separate from it, and it is here in the woods where one explores the self through all senses of one's being. Outdoor teachers may very well be following Rousseau's (1762/1969) encouragement of the pedagogical development of the child's senses in the natural world, but they are including themselves as well. Rousseau positions outdoor education as follows: The lesson, educationally, "comes to us from nature … the use we learn to make of this growth is the education … we gain by our experience of our surroundings" (p. 6). The freedom may be the growth that occurs for us when development is imposed on us by nature. I wonder if Kelly and the student witnessed each other's growth in that moment? Rousseau reveals that we must teach students "to live … life is not breath, but action, the use of our senses, our mind, our faculties, every part of ourselves which makes us conscious of our being" (p. 10). It is a full-body experience, the intentional awareness of being-in-the-world. The lesson Kelly applies from Rousseau's *Emile* is to use direct experience of the body, action in the outdoors, for students will be "moved by the beauty of the spectacle of nature" (p. 132). And so will the teacher be moved! Does this freedom that encourages the body, beyond the desk, lie outside school?

Kelly recalls a feeling—a swelling of being—a moment transcended by body; it leaped out and connected Kelly to a world in the wilderness, but the connection was full and complete. Students were with Kelly in this experience. "I know the students were experiencing what I felt because their faces had that *look*. This was the look of learning outside, not the dull stare of my traditional indoor lesson," notes Kelly. There was a connection to people, learning, and landscape. Kelly felt more free to be a learner with the students outside, and being outside allowed Kelly to step outside the indoor role, of the educator who passes on knowledge, to become a learner who was active in the learning process. As humans, being a part of the landscape brings our senses to alertness, and within the awakening we discover pieces of our being, for our senses tell us little bits about who we are. When senses combine, one feels fully alive, aware, connected, and tuned to life. In the woods, Kelly and the students were learning and doing, removed from school time and the confines of school place, making stronger the pedagogical experience. "We had slowed and became unaware of the relentless-academic march forward"; in its place, Kelly claims their senses presented the world to them as it is, not its abstractions. Did the freedom expressed by a look radiate the primordial moment of experientially being *in* and *of* the world, and not confined by the limited space of a building? Kelly states that that day marked the moment when the relational aspect of teaching was made more apparent in the shared learning experience with students. Indoors teaching was a technical act, but in the outdoors Kelly was free to be engaged in the learning, and it showed in their facial expressions. I wonder if a teacher always has to go outdoors to achieve this pedagogical moment. Why was Kelly compelled to go outside anyway?

Freedom Is Not Absolute

Do we intuitively know that the outdoors can, potentially, bring us degrees of personal freedom? Hillary, in numerous interviews, reported going to Mount Everest simply because it was there (Muller Hacking, 1997). Is Hillary speaking from a point of no restrictions, an absolute freedom to go out and do as he sees fit as a person during his time in history? Do teachers think like Hillary when they decide to take a group of children outdoors: "I take my students out for class, because its there!" Do teachers who go outdoors think: I could be more free to teach what I want out there! How is freedom experienced for teachers because they are outside? Is the experience of freedom the same as free speech or free will? Blackburn (1996) suggest that "Narrowly, or negatively, freedom is thought of as the absence of constraint" (p. 146). The teachers' shared experiences, when they were free of constraints; they ascribe that specific experience to being outside. Blackburn highlights this dimension to the meaning of freedom: "Positively, freedom is a condition of liberation from social and cultural forces that are perceived as impeding self-realization. To become free is therefore a challenge that is only met by personal transformation … or by social transformation" (p. 149). Is teaching outside the freedom to experience more than curricular possibilities? Is pedagogy brought to the forefront when teachers are not bound by the limits of teaching indoors? Is pedagogy more easily experienced and *seen* outdoors?

Throughout this chapter, Bobby, Jay, Leslie, and Jamie share moments of pedagogical freedom as the awareness of freedom to be more natural in their relationships with children. The sources of their anecdotes vary, but they share common themes of release, uninhibitedness, and freedom despite unique differences within each narrative. The freedom that seems to be a part of the outdoor teaching experience is linked, in degrees, to the lifeworld of these teachers through self-awakening, power, and subtle discovery—connection to a more natural world. At the center of each anecdote is the relational aspect of children, which is the pivotal reason that underlies each of the following phenomenological descriptions of teaching experiences outside the school.

The Experience of Roaming the Edge

Bobby experienced the outside freedom slightly differently from Kelly. Bobby commented that when the teaching experience is extended to the outdoor world, there is *no want*. For Bobby, there is no desire to have those learning resources an indoor class may not have. The outdoors offered all that was necessary for learning to occur. As Bobby stated emphatically on numerous occasions, "I had everything that I could ever want as a teacher when I went outdoors with my kids. All I have to do is roam and the outdoors will give me what I want!"

> Crystal Cliffs is one of my favorite spots. It has the majesty of the trees of a typical Acadian forest. It has the wide-open fields, meadows that gradually rise to an exposed gypsum cliff. It has a little meandering river, a fresh water pond, a saltwater estuary, and the ocean. It offers everything needed for a biology-field trip designed to examine the insects that inhabit the edges of bordering habitats. To make the determination as to why certain species are present, the students collect bugs from various ecotones by pooting insects; sucking them up in a piece of rubber hose, 4–5 inches long, with a piece of pantyhose tightly attached to one end that stops the insect. Then you can blow the bug into the collection jar. You have to go with the insects and I can't predict where or what will be along an edge at any given time. I have to be flexible allowing the kids to go between the

> zones. Students have to be able to roam, criss-crossing the ecotones; we were all over the place. It's hard at first, one would think it was teaching chaos, but it is not. There is a freedom in this lesson; we have to roam to learn. I still panic, at how disjointed the lesson appears, kids all over the place—the whole time I am feeling out-of-control. But it always comes together, the data linked to the bigger context: historical, geographical, and geological of the area, and why certain insects gravitate in certain zones. Crystal Cliffs is a convergence of curriculum; so many subjects come into play helping us make sense. Could you imagine trying to pull this off indoors? Everything is so interconnected out here and that includes us as well! (Bobby, Biology teacher)

The link with Bobby's freedom is the experience of convergence: subject knowledge, student-insect finds, and the roaming between ecotones. I also wonder if the freedom in this outdoor learning was a result of feeling out of control. Bobby comments several times that "*other knowledge*" was allowed to exist within the lesson plan; it was much more than just insects. Subject separation or segregation is hard or next to impossible to maintain when teaching outdoors. As Bobby states, "How can I keep the world out of the lesson? When we are standing right in it, they see it, and I can't stop them from knowing it. As a teacher I am free to draw on what the outdoors offers at the time, and nature makes immediate sense for our learning. I cannot control everything out here. I have to go where the learning is best for my students." This freedom is not about Bobby breaking the teaching code, stepping outside the designated outcomes of the curriculum. Bobby allowed students to follow their learning interests and, pedagogically, gives them the freedom to roam the habitat edges to satisfy their inquiry. Pedagogically, I wonder if trust in the students is what allows Crystal Cliffs to stand out as a favourite learning place.

Bobby's freedom is clearly in line with what Kant (1788/1998) refers to as "the simple nature of our soul" (p. 117). I see this as the simple connection that we, as humans, have to our world, which is primordial and existed before social conventions imposed their ways of being on our lives. The freedom for Bobby is in exploring, experiencing, and teaching his children without curricular restrictions; a manner of learning that existed long before schooling was institutionalized—learning by freely roaming and naturally making the links. Bobby's position on freedom is reflective of Kant's view: "Thus we have nothing but nature in which we must seek the connection and order of occurrences of the world … because if freedom were determined according to the laws, it would not be freedom, but nothing other than nature" (p. 485). Kant clearly states that a break from the guidance of rules will make it possible to achieve a "thoroughly connected experience" (p. 487). Does Bobby's outside pedagogical experience of allowing students to roam freely allow, in turn, for a more full convergence of learning possibilities because the natural connections result in having an abundance of resources for the class? Bobby's statement—"I have everything that I could want"—reminds me that, for good learning to occur, a teacher struggles to support students in their learning. Important to the relationship is, naturally trust. Does going outdoors free Bobby from acquiring the needed resources to develop appropriate learning experiences, or is it the freedom to trust students as they roam edges to learn?

Gadamer (2001) clarifies the epistemological understanding of freedom: "Freedom is not a fact in nature but rather … a fact of reason, something we must think, because without thinking of ourselves as free we cannot understand ourselves at all. Freedom is the fact of reason" (p. 123). Gadamer (1986) asserts that the feeling of freedom experienced as a conscious feeling is appropriate because the natural conditions allow for a being that is aware of choice and can thus act free (p. 123). However, Gadamer (1986) reminds us to consider the following: "it is by no means the case that everything accompanied by the conscious feeling of freedom is actually the result of a free decision" (p. 123). An explanation for Bobby's sense of freedom is teaching lies in the rational understanding that in the outdoors it makes perfect sense to open up a lesson to the many ways of knowing the world. Outside, Bobby could resist the over-rationalized, mechanistic, subject separation that has come to dominate Western curricular offerings.

As Bobby's students roam in and connect with their environment, Bobby is able to connect to people and place—"everything is interconnected"—trusting students relationally by allowing them to roam outside. Bobby is able to become that link between the natural world, the learning, and the confidence in the student-teacher relationship outside the school. When possible, students can roam freely, and the teacher can become more a guide in the experience who helps them make the connections to the curriculum.

Determinism or Indeterminism

The following two anecdotes characterize a freedom that reflects the dispute between determinism and indeterminism. Jay and Jamie both share lived experiences that exemplify further unique elements of pedagogical freedom. Common here, in their freedom, is the witnessing that is possible in the outdoor setting. Freedom for these teachers closely aligns itself with a notion of pedagogy: leading students to their learning and allowing them the space to experience it, first hand, with little teacher interference. This *hands off* approach is difficult to maintain as a teacher: instinctively, teachers want to involve themselves in their students' learning. The outdoors provides space allowing for a distancing to happen naturally between students and teachers.

> Every year I teach a unit on Entrepreneurialism, and I do a field trip to one of our local-community business. That year was the Moon Sugar Shack. I will never forget this little girl had soot all over her face. At the beginning of the winter term she was so awkward; concerned about her presence, how she looked, what she said, she was stuck and struggling to be her natural self. She worked hard just like all the other kids. Her job was to manage the sugar shack: simply, keep the sap flow measured and the fires stoked for boiling. I remember seeing this girl, as we were packing up. She was different: she was not fussing with herself, she did not care, she was on a high, and she was in that zone. She was having an experience that was so rich for her that she was not concerned about her hair or how she looked. During the closing statements, she mentioned that she loved the fact that she knew she could run her own business: she liked math, she was

> organized, but she loved the hands on. For the first time she felt in control of what she could do, and that she felt awake out here in the woods. She said that school smothered her. She wanted to run her own business and could care less what it was. I was floored. What a difference a day can make. She had long, straight, blond hair and she was covered in charcoal and she smelled of smoke from the sugar-shack fire. This young girl was just captured by her experience. She flourished in the freedom, outside the school. She was alive. Education is all about change, but I realized that I could not measure or evaluate that day for her. That was beyond my control. (Jay, Career and Life Management teacher)

Jay explained that when he watches children play, even role-play, he is witness to freedom. A child at play is the embodiment of non-restraint. The student was playing a role of entrepreneur. Jay observed, "The outside experience allowed this child to learn that her future could be undefined. Why does everything have to be cast in stone with kids? It seems that when they come into high school there is a pressure to determine their futures as some forgone conclusion; *undefined* can be good when you're a kid." The indeterminate world is living the possible. Jay's student sensed, through fire and smoke, a future possibility that *could* be. Similarly, Gadamer (1986) refers to a beauty that is recognizable in freedom (p. 125). The freedom of play is not "some substitute dream-world" where we lose ourselves; rather, it is a "mirror … in which we catch a sight of ourselves in a way that is often unexpected or unfamiliar: what we are, what we might be, and what we are about" (p. 30). Play, even a role-play for school, is a powerful and creative experience for all ages. Pedagogically, the out-of-doors for Jay became a learning place where learning need not be confined to a measured-and-scored event that determines the future lives of students. The sugar shack showed a life that could be possible and that could not be determined by the conventions of scholastic performances; the teacher, away from the control of marking and evaluation, realized that not all learning could be measured.

Jay was also learning, or relearning, the pedagogical importance of freedom. The teacher in this lived experience emulates Nietzsche's (1966) position on adulthood: "Mature [adult]hood: that means to have found again the seriousness one had as a child—in play" (p. 83). Play is the power of spontaneous freedom. Play may very well be the human act that is without determinism. As Gadamer (1986) notes, the "imagination produces inner intuition without presupposing the determinacy of a given concept … [it] really 'gives rise to thought'" (p. 166). Jay's experience of freedom could very well be that of teaching the simple beauty of a role-play, and this witnessing of the educative change, by a teacher, would be liberating. The play here involved hands-on contact in the framework of the subject area—entrepreneurialism—and it approached maturity when what it hinted at became a serious possibility: the indeterminate freedom of possibility.

The Novel Outdoors

Ironically, past meanings of *freedom* emphasized freedom from bondage from the outside (Hoad, 1996, p. 182). Yet what does it mean for a teacher to share in sensation of freedom with their students outside? Grondin's (1995) work reveals the interpretative concept of *Sollen* as an imperative to be (p. 51). To be *something*, as a human, is part of our existence, wantonly or not: "To be 'free' means that we are not fixed in a reality, but that we have to assume ourselves … a future we can open up for ourselves" (Grondin, p. 51). Essentially, Grondin encourages us to consider a fundamental element of being human: *care*. This is our connection to the world and our understanding of self in our world with others.

Grondin's (1995) sense of care surfaces in Jamie's anecdote. Jamie explains that going outdoors allows for a "genuine developing of a real educational rapport." Jamie models a lifestyle—the outside teacher—by participating in a way of being in the world that students experience for the first time. Jamie presents another way to live in society—abuse-, drug-, and crime-free—hoping that the students will see and learn from him that the outdoors, the activities, and the relationships are about healthy choices. From these positive experiences, Jamie hopes the students will begin to care about themselves and one another, and that they will discover the outside is a place where they can start to enjoy life in a healthy, constructive way. Jamie remarks, "My students have unhappy lives. I offer, as a part of school, something I feel might work for them, and a way for me to really connect to them as people. For at-risk kids, you cannot measure learning in the traditional way; not by specific academic activities linked to the outcomes of the Public School Program." Going outside is special, and real important for the kids that have experienced so many indoor failures. And for many of these kids, indoors is equal to incarceration. Jamie tells of such a relational moment when a significant connection occurred at Camp Victoria:

> Canoeing for me is second nature, like walking is for others. I had two girls who had never really canoed before and they were withdrawn and noncommittal; they just did not want to be there with the class. Yet

> somehow, by the end of the day, they thought it was awesome. That day, we were held captive to the wind. The wind was so strong on the little lake that we had to fight every gust to keep the canoes and kayaks going where we wanted. The kids were struggling and I was thinking there was no way those two girls, or any of them, were going to want to continue this after lunch. I could see it, the strain on their faces, the frustration in their every stroke, and hear the curses when the next gust would kick up, blowing them all over the place. I decided to lead them to a little cove on the lee shore and discuss my decision to postpone the lesson. When we escaped the noise of the wind, I heard these two girls cheer and say, "See I knew we could do it! We made it!" But they did not stay on course; they were not using the proper strokes; it was some of the worst paddling I have ever witnessed—for all of them had little control over their boats. None of the paddling program mattered because out there, that day in the wind, it was about perseverance, meeting challenges, and to be freedom to meet the wind on their own. Out here, it is not about failing or adhering to a judge's order; it's about taking a deep breath for you. That day, those girls battled the wind on their terms by making it to the little cove. This was more than learning something. This was about taking control, not about passing a canoe clinic. (Jamie, At-risk Support teacher)

Jamie pointed out that in the vastness of the outdoors, it is the novelty of freedom that allows children to try on new identities by experiencing a different lifestyle—for a time they are not the probated ones. There are times when the benefits of being outdoors are positive because it is a new environment. This is a cliché, but it's true. For Jamie's students they are acting outside the bounds and rituals of failure, and for some it is stepping outside the comfort zone. Jamie commented that those kids met little of the canoeing outcomes, but they faced a challenge that meant much more. Ironically, the wind trapped these kids on a lake where learning the targeted skill was next to impossible, failure was to be expected. For Jamie, going outdoors was typically to escape a previous existence of incarceration and failure. Jamie witnessed the children valuing the outdoors for the very same reason: the challenge that can be met head on and for personal reasons. They were not told they had to stay on that lake or continue to battle the wind. The students were free to go, but they decided to remain because, in the outdoors, they were discovering their own self worth and their ability to accomplish things not associated with adults who were in control of all aspects of their lives. "In the wind," noted Jamie, "the kids decided their direction and chose to struggle for their own reasons."

Jamie indicated that the populations that fall under the responsibility of the at-risk program are children under the charge of family services, addiction services, health services, violent offenders and probated youth with the justice system, and early school leavers; all students fall under the authority of Nova Scotia agencies that step in to care for children when parents or guardians are unable or renege on their responsibility. Overall, this population of students has experienced repeated failures within the school system. Jamie's program is based in a school, but the core of the program occurs outside the building. As Jamie observed during our conversations, "These are the kids that no one wants to teach." Working indoors with them is not possible, according to Jamie, because the indoors is associated with a negative past. "I would never be able to connect to these kids inside the school. In the classroom, I would represent everything that many of these kids detest about school," he reflected; "I would never be able to connect on any level; care would never enter into our relationship." How, then, did this teacher experience this relational aspect of pedagogy in the freedom of the outdoors?

Outdoors, in the wind, Jamie learned that to be pedagogical, one cannot care for the wrong reasons. Jamie wanted these kids to accept the benefits of the outdoors to help them make healthy future decisions; for these kids, however, the outdoors presented opportunities to experience a simple freedom that was effectively the freedom *from* an indoor way of life regulated and controlled for bureaucratic reasons. Levinas (1969) suggest that lessons are available to us in that which is absolutely foreign: "The strangeness of the Other, [their] very freedom … Their freedom which is 'common' to them is precisely what separates them" (pp. 73–74) from what is known and familiar. How does freedom present itself as an experience for this teacher? Levinas highlights the relational connection that occurs with the recognition a person's face. The face reveals the condition of a person in the world:

> This gaze that supplicates and demands, that can supplicate only because it demands, deprived of everything because entitled to everything, and which one recognises in giving … this gaze is precisely the epiphany of the face as a face.

> The nakedness of the face is destituteness. To recognize the Other is to recognize a hunger. (p. 75)

Jamie's students were freer in those moments in the oppressive wind than at most times since agency involvement in their lives. Jamie recognizes that the students under the care of the at-risk program are free, for they have no real place in society or school. Levinas asserts: "Freedom … can be manifested only outside totality, but this 'outside totality' opens with the transcendence of the face. To think of freedom as within totality is to reduce freedom to the status of an indetermination of being" (p. 225).

For Levinas (1969), it is true that freedom is not in death, but it exists in suffering. And for the children in Jamie's class, all they have known is suffering and pain. These kids are the objects of the "unwanted in education." According to Jamie, the school-based program is the last measure taken for many of these students. To seek the unfolding of lessons indoors is to invite participatory failure. The outdoors allow for simplicity in life and the freedom to connect with one another as a community of social strangers. This teacher and the students in the program are rebuilding their own world of learning that flourishes outside. Freedom is found in this community effort. Levinas sees freedom as a by-product of living: "To be free is to build a world in which one could be free" (p. 165). The freedom, notes Jamie, lies is building an educative world based on the real relationships that form between the students and their teacher, one that is free of the normative social structures found in classroom-based education, but even more on sharing a struggle in pointing a canoe in the wind.

The Price of Freedom

The pedagogical experience of freedom these teachers refer to is closer to my understanding of release—emotional, spiritual, intellectual, and corporeal—that allows me to become more aware of my relational self to others. This is the feeling I gain when I step outside after a long, cold winter stretch and feel the spring sun on my face. I smell a sweet breeze that blows the cold, stale air away, and I can feel my spirit soar at the hint of warmer, brighter days ahead. At that moment I know I can hang on for summer weather; the day frees me and energizes me. Some would say that freedom is experienced in the absence of control. These teachers, away from the school, are free from institutionalized control (which some would call educational oppression).

I see this freedom from absolute control as the experience of freedom the boys engaged with in *Lord of the Flies* (Golding, 1958). This is a classic tale about a group of English schoolboys who are plane-wrecked on a deserted island. For the first time in their lives, this group of boys in social isolation experience real freedom, beyond the control of parents, their boarding school, and society in general. At first, the stranded boys cooperate as they attempt to gather food, make shelters, and maintain signal fires. Overseeing their efforts are Ralph, Piggy, and, to some extent, Jack. Although Ralph tries to impose order and delegate responsibility, there are many boys who would rather swim, play, or hunt the island's wild pig population. Soon Ralph's rules are ignored or challenged outright. Jack, the leader of the pig hunters, manages to lure away many boys to join his band of painted savages. The situation deteriorates as the trappings of civilization continue to fall away, until Ralph discovers that instead of being hunters, he and Piggy have become the hunted. Indeed, freedom does not equal a wondrous existence after all. The micro society the boys create in unrestrained freedom resorts to savagery, brutality, madness, and disregard for social structure.

This brutal freedom is not the experience of educational freedom shared by the teachers. The freedom to teach experienced outside the school illuminates an awareness for each teacher that is shared in these anecdotes. Moments of self-discovery occurred because the instructors were outdoors with their students. In our conversations, these teachers refer to prices paid to achieve this pedagogical experience outside the school. Going outside was not as simple as being free to do whatever the teacher desired. There was a tremendous amount of responsibility. Leslie and Jamie have shared moments in their teaching experiences that reveal the complexities of teaching outside. Leslie's comments about this are poignant:

> I realized pretty quick that you can't just beam your class outside, papers and all, expecting to do a more refreshing outdoor version of regular class. It's like tearing the roof and walls off the building and hoping the kids won't notice. Instead, I have to dream up missions (let's go collect some swampy water samples and bring them back inside where there are microscopes and desks, or let's go measure the angle of inclination to the top of the flagpole or the radio tower 5 km away), then come back inside and draw up a trig. problem about it on the board. The outdoors is a rich source of experience, but as far as regular school subjects go, teaching inside often seems easier inside. (Leslie, Geography teacher)

These teachers did not experience the brutal side of human nature in their found pedagogical freedom, but they did become aware of other vital aspects of the relational quality needed for outdoor education. Teaching outside is not a simple act of instruction; to go outdoors with children requires accountability. The outdoors highlights the importance of pedagogy that is sometimes taken for granted indoors.

I Am the Rules

Leslie experienced commitment as pedagogical accountability that is deeply rooted *in loco parentis*. Leslie claimed, "I am the rules." The experience shared by this teacher brings into question accountability and right and wrong—for pedagogical purposes. The experience presented in the next anecdote reveals a violation of rules, a rewriting of an environmental-ethical code because of the legalities of the Parks Canada Act that protects the natural landscape in all Canadian federal parks. Leslie asserts that outside the classroom decisions are based on life, not on institutional protocol; outside, with children, choices go beyond what was legal, ethical, right, and wrong. Leslie reasons that decisions are made in accordance with what is most appropriate for the class. Student welfare is paramount, and outside the school, the weight of the freedom to make necessary decisions rested with the teacher alone.

> During the fall of 1998, on the Liberty Trail, at Kejimkujik Park, we were hiking in the rain for about six hours on the second day of a three-day backwoods trip as a part of our unit on Canadian National Parks. When we got to our designated site, we were ready to dry things out, get warm, but there was no wood to start a fire. This was critical because we were wet, tired, and cold; a terrible combination at the end of any day in the backcountry, especially in October when the night temperatures can really

> drop low resulting in hypothermia. The park is supposed to provide backcountry wood for burning, but there was no organized wood there to support my group. When I looked at the faces of my group, I experienced their need. It was an immediate decision. Damn it, I am going to break the rules. Even though we were not supposed to go around scavenging wood—a national park by-law that we studied in class—we did anyway. Regardless of the fact that someone else had let us down—leaving no firewood—we realized we had to still take care of ourselves. That was a tough decision. How would these kids see me from now on? I am supposed to lead them, not mislead them into thinking they can break the rules when situations warrant. In the school, the rules and policies are well established to predict life developments. Outside the school requires more: you can have some rules and policies, but they are never sufficient. You cannot regulate the outside world. (Leslie, Geography teacher)

Leslie knew that care for her class was not comparable to the wood-scavenging rule in federal parks. Leslie justified the decision with the following rationale: "I suppose, without being too dramatic, I broke the law as well. I think you're quicker to break the rules out of school than in school. Out of the school, it is sort of more my classroom in terms of I am accountable to myself and my kids only." We break rules in a school as well, but for Leslie the need to defy the rule was not school based, it was a matter of simple survival; cold wet kids could mean hypothermic or dead children. For Leslie, when we read in the Code of Ethics (Nova Scotia Teachers Union, 2004) about our caring intentions for children, it is not a matter of *should*. It is a matter of *must*. Leslie commented that the experience was a reminder that being outside meant moving outside the role of teacher; Leslie became rule maker, breaker, principal, parent, and judge. At that moment "the students were looking at me, waiting for my decision. What kind of role model was I going to be? I was never more aware of how important my role was to students. I know my decision was best, because when you are out there with your students, everything else is second to their well-being. Everything!" The freedom of being away from school governance invested Leslie's actions with greater responsibility, and, in turn, Leslie recognized that this is the price one must be willing to pay when heading outdoors.

Testing And Teasing

Many acts performed as teachers are judged and scrutinized by others for appropriateness, and this extends into our self-examinations through reflection. I am sure Leslie's students understood the predicament they faced as a class and that they supported their teacher's decision. Is there a greater sense of relational awareness for one another, a pedagogical accountability that is inherent in being in the outdoors? The sense of awareness is somehow magnified in all the decision-making teachers face outside the school. Jamie has a very different concept of awareness, which emerged within the freedom engendered by being away from school peer pressure. Jamie has come to see the role of the teacher as that of the representative of the place where these kids can be kids, and where they can learn. School, as the place of learning, is not always the place where students want to be. In school, many of his students do not have a community of peers for support and, for many, this lack of a social network extends into an absence of family bonds outside school. The exception resides in Jamie's anecdote. Jamie remarks, "I am very aware of how we become something of a family. I do not care how family is defined, but I know that we become one! This bonding happens with so many of my outdoor classes." Going outside establishes a different way of being for students. Jamie continues, "We leave as a class; students and teacher. The outside changes us into some kind of family unit. This experience taught me how a real community learns how to fight gracefully."

> There was one individual I decided to have him step up and become nutrition leader for the trip. He did really well by supporting other students; helping them stay hydrated, kept the trail snacks organized, took opportunities to fairly disperse food and equipment, and he became very parent-like in his concern and interest. When we finished hiking to the back cove of Long Lake (see Figure 13) he quickly had a tarp down and began setting up for lunch; gathering from the other members the lunch ingredients, the stoves, and the pots. Then I hear him, "Who has the pots?" He said it again and the group finally responded, "I don't know." Two minutes later, he says again, "Somebody has to have the pots." He went around to each student: "Do you have the pots? Are you sure? Check." This guy would not stop asking. I did not say anything. I chose to stay out of this and give him the opportunity to resolve this on his own. I wanted to step in, but this was his situation. I knew the group respects him, but he did not know this until that day. I know it sounds crazy, but the class helped him because of the pots. I felt pride because I could see that was a positive

> change that occurred in him. This kid then asks again, "Come on, just give me the pots." One student grins as she opened her pack to cough up the pots. This was not a mean grin, but a little smile that affirmed his place in this group. Then the teasing started; a gentle teasing that affirmed his place in this community. I suppose he was being tested. (Jamie, At-risk Support teacher)

Figure 13: This is the back cove on Long Lake from Jamie's anecdote. Photograph by A. Foran.

Outside, and in that context, Jamie had to decide what was most appropriate for dealing with this student's situation. Pedagogically Jamie decided not to intervene and allowed the child to be free in his decision. An individual, personal change inside a school may not be apparent for many children who experience difficulty; they exist and become lost in the shuffle of numbers. Jamie pointed out an important consideration: "[This student] would not let it drop, whereas before, in grade 10, he would never have challenged them. I could not even get him to speak last year. Last year he would have starved before he got the pots." Outside, students become the center of their own community, where they belong and are challenged to live by a code of community standards that evolves from their engagement in it. This living code is not imposed on students as it is indoors. Jamie mentioned that this probably would never have occurred indoors because it would be too safe—there would be too few opportunities to create community experiences, or students could hide out in the crowd. Jamie laughed and noted, "I suppose I could have a sleepover and hide the cooking utensils in the school kitchen. No it just does not have the same real-life meaning. These kids have hiked all morning in fall temperatures: a hot meal was priority, and they knew it." A classroom outdoors allows for students to have each other in their sights, and they challenge each other and themselves. There is no hiding.

Speaking of my own past experiences, it is apparent that students and teachers can see the person outdoors: weaknesses, strengths, ambitions, quirks, fears, and degrees of confidence. Outdoors, they have what Aoki (see Pinar & Irwin, 2005) refers to as "supervisions" as part of *videre* (to see), as part of the "insights" that contribute to an illuminated understanding (p. 373). For teachers, we are entrusted to teach our students, and education is about change. Indoors, this pace of change for displaced youth is not always visited, if at all. The outside freedom, despite the vastness of outdoor space, brings the individual into pedagogical focus. The focus for Jamie's class is the need for community, and as described by Jamie the sense of belonging to a family that includes the teacher.

Pedagogical Freedom

I too experienced various types of freedom when I taught my classes outside the school. It was never just one type of or distinct feeling of freedom; nor is this a freedom that is absolute and sanitized of societal conventions. The freedom expressed here is relational, unscheduled, and unbounded from the pressures of the school as an institution that can interfere with the relational significance between students and their teacher. Freedom was disparate, situational, and unique, in keeping with the class and the students. Pedagogically, the one similarity I can associate with the lived experiences of these teachers is that I was freer to act as a teacher for these children when outdoors. *Freedom* in no way suggests that I was absolved of my responsibilities when with my children outdoors. Away from the school, from institutional structures, I was freer to enter into an appropriate and natural relationship with students engaged in learning. Outside, I was more aware of my environment, my purpose of being with children, and of the children themselves. Thinking back now, I sense that many of the exchanges I had with students meant sharing of a little secret: the possible that can occur out-of-doors. We knew we could be free outside the school to explore learning in a novel context, and we were freer to come together as caring people. I wonder now if our experience of freedom was the source of the heightened energy that ignited the class every time we stepped outside.

Is it possible to be free of all societal conventions? Czajkowski (1996) tells about her life as a *wilderness dweller*. She removed herself from all social structures and carved out an existence for herself deep in the British Columbia interior. With nothing but hand tools and a few luxuries of life, like a canvas tent, she lived the free life; living outside, and connected to the world that offered her constant freedom. However, Czajkowski was a prisoner of freedom; she lived free everyday with no hope of escape except to go back to civilization. This freedom is different than Jamie's lived experience; Czajkowski's freedom is one of human isolation. Is ultimate freedom? This is not the freedom that pedagogy allows teachers to experience. Pedagogically freedom that is a relational endeavor, a pedagogical bond between teacher and students, is similar to that as a parent and its child (van Manen, 2006). I wonder, then, if parents experience a freer relational connection with their children outside the home? Czajkowski sought the simplicity of a warming sun, the whispering wind, the lapping music of the lake, and the babble of a brook, but alone. Seeking the beauty and simplicity of the world was also important to the teachers in this study, but it seems they relished the shared experience: pedagogy.

Simpson and Yates, world famous mountain climbers in the documentary *Touching the Void* (Macdonald, 2004), refer to freedom accessed through the climb. Simpson recalls the feeling of freedom when he stood on the peak and knew his efforts had earned him the privilege of claiming that moment of freedom as his own—standing where no other person could at that moment. However, the challenge to experience such freedom comes at a price. In one harrowing account, when Simpson and Yates nearly lost their lives while questing, again, for that sense of freedom from the world, they experienced mortality by *touching the void*. Simpson understands this absolute freedom as touching the void in humanity: You, the mountain, determination to live, and the realization that you will die alone. This void is not the freedom experienced by the teachers and their classes; pedagogical freedom generated simply by being with others. Simpson and Yates experienced freedom as the challenge that separated them from humanity. For the teachers in this study, teaching outside was a deliberate decision to use an instructional form that broke from the conventional mode of teaching—the classroom and connecting youth to humanity. Kelly mentions the dirt engrained in and displayed on hands that have labored. Inside the world is clean, orderly, and adult. The outside is the antithesis of this professional world that is based on management, discipline, and rules of order. Kelly shared a look that acknowledged the child, the learner, and the freedom the outdoors permitted for both to learn.

Bobby teaches in the freedom of what the world can offer the curricular experience, in contrast to inside learning, where learning is manufactured and can be strikingly artificial. For Bobby, having his students finish the assignment was not paramount. The learning experience was not bound within the covers of a text. You have to get out there and allow the lesson to flow: from ecotone, to learning moment, to discovery; teachers must be willing to experience the convergence of the world through the lesson. The experience is about leading students to a zone of realization that, in a sense, becomes the zone for the teacher.

Change is possible inside, but the freedom Jay experienced generated change in the student that was a result of being outdoors in a mode of educative play. Jamie confronted the rituals of failure that many troubled youth experience in schools by offering them the opportunity to form genuine relationships forged from challenges that the outdoors offer. Outside is the place where these kids talk and live the process of learning, and they do so together. The key for Jamie, as their teacher, rested in relationships that would develop appropriately due to care. This personal growth would have been less likely indoors. The novelty of the outdoor environment disrupts the scholastic experience for at-risk students and presents the possibilities of another learning experience—dwelling in a place free of their pasts. This may well be true for many learners.

What was important for Leslie was how she saw the needs of her learners and the lesson of rules over what is most pedagogical for a teacher and their students. I could relate well to the experience and recalled many times that I, too, had to break rules or bend them considerably. School rules of conduct could not always accommodate the lived experiences we encounter outside the control of the school. Outside, I became aware, almost immediately, that to be able to teach lessons out here, I would have to be flexible and open to a constant dynamic that would frequently be beyond my control. Outside teaching required me to develop a new way of seeing my students: I had to see beyond the curriculum. It was when I was outside that I really began to see children.

One could call this mode seeing, or focus, surveillance, but this is not be the case in the pedagogical relationship. Yet many teachers have shared this pressing sense of surveillance and are aware that going outside to teach places them out of view, but the students more into view. Bobby made this awareness apparent, and other teachers have commented that they, too, shared this awareness of being on an accepted edge of pedagogical practice. Here I remind the reader of the anecdote I related in Chapter 5, of the teacher on the field—Bobby, who was engaged in tree identification with the class. Bobby had a sense of doing something wrong when confronted by the vice principal. I believe Bobby experienced another type of awareness: “I am under surveillance.” Foucault (1979) brings a different focus to the importance of *seeing* in education in his disturbing work on *Discipline and Punishment*. Referring to controlling students, Foucault states:

> Instead of bending all its subjects into a single uniform mass, it separates, analyses, differentiates … to the point of necessary and sufficient single units…. Discipline ‘makes’ individuals; it is the specific technique of a power that regards individuals

> both as objects and as instruments … not a triumphant power … a modest, suspicious power. (p. 170)

It's this suspicion that brings the outside teaching practice under scrutiny. The school system uses a range of techniques to control that include examinations, standards of qualification, normalizing judgments, and hierarchical observation. The vice principal, as expected, exercised his power of the gaze: This is an "exercise of discipline [that] presupposes a mechanism that coerces by means of observation … all power would be exercised solely through exact observation; each gaze would form a part of the overall functioning of power" (Foucault, 1979, p. 171). The element required in this gaze so that it might be an effective controlling measure is the ability "to render visible those who are inside it … to transform individuals … [and] provide a hold on their conduct, to carry the effects of power right to them, to make it possible to know them, to alter them" (Foucault, p. 172). In essence, the "the school building was to be a mechanism for training. It was a pedagogical machine" (Foucault, p. 172), and Bobby was followed by the vice principal because teaching outdoors put instruction outside the gaze, outside the apparatus of observation.

School has become the instrument of continuous surveillance. The efficacy of the gaze requires, according to Foucault, a "perfect disciplinary apparatus [that] would make it possible for a single gaze to see everything constantly … everything must be known … nothing would escape" (p. 172). Teaching outside the school is escaping the eye, avoiding the look, removing the educational practice from examination. In short, being outside is a break from the control of "disciplinary power," which is,

> both absolutely indiscreet, since it is everywhere and always alert, since by its very principle it leaves no zone of shade and constantly supervises the very individuals who are entrusted with the task of supervising; absolutely "discrete," for it functions permanently and largely in silence."

For Foucault, the silence of school was nothing short of a ritual of power that would measure and judge all within the dominion of education. Doubtless, this included the very practices of teachers. Teaching outside a school opens teachers' lived experiences to a range of elements that require sensitivity and awareness.

Although it heightens focus, teaching outside is not an extreme personal challenge for an experiential educator, nor is it the thrill associated with grand adventures. Teaching outside of school is a way of teaching and being-in-the-world. Why should there be a commonality of freedom as a result of teaching in the outdoors? Is it the freedom of independence and sovereignty? Does freedom live in the liberation and the euphoria of a different way of teaching and in engaging in learning with a body no longer confined in the place called *school*? One might quickly identify this as empowerment. Ironically, this is an inward experience of power. Gadamer (2002) helps me explain power ontologically: "'Freedom is combined with power.' For power that is more than its expression is always freedom … not mechanical power … specifically 'germinal power' … 'the primary and common source of all human activity … this is freedom'" (p. 206). Freedom from the school environment—the confining spaces of the classroom, the crush of the hallway, the scheduled demands of the bell forcing the hunched reaction—is naturally connected to the form of liberation that the out-of-doors can offer.

CHAPTER 7

CURRICULUM OF INTENSITY

Critical during the *check in* with the students—a one-on-one conference—is to connect to each of them. The students have to trust me, so that I really know the progress of this student. When the students trust you they speak very truthfully and in confidence to you. That level of trust is intense; it is so strong. A high for me is feeling that intense relationship with the person under the plastic tarp or in the pile of brush—it's become our whole world. The connection I have is so powerful and only possible because of the level of trust. They feel safe with you—real safe!

I remember this one student during whose feet were freezing. I knew he did not have any dry socks, but I asked anyway to open the conversation up. I ask this student: "Well, what could you do?" I suggest: "How about trying to dry your socks out? You could take your socks off and put your boots back on. Then dry them by rubbing them between your mitts, use friction and then warm your socks under your coat."

The trust is so immediate; he did not balk at my advice. I do not know if this is possible, but I felt his respect when I gave advice. The trust I experienced that night was absolute; there is no hesitation in accepting my help. That level of trust being built regardless of age difference,

> gender, academics, anything was a personal high. In that trust I know I am more than a teacher, it is so intense because at that moment I am all they have. (Kelly, Physical Education teacher)

Trust

Does teaching in the outdoors go against our societal perceptions of our ability to control our comfort, safety, and security? Kelly points out that the students are vulnerable and way out of their comfort zone. This scenario is a real challenge: it is night, cold, and they are on their own with little to no gear. And the youth are challenged not only to deal with the environment, but the emotions of being lost on their own. The relationship between teacher and student had to be unconditional. I envision a relational experience that was rich: a teacher that was *fully there* for the child. The pedagogical relationship is that of teacher as caring leader, not merely the conveyor of knowledge. Within outdoor education, Kelly's teaching practice seems closely affiliated with the authenticity of the Greek intention of pedagogy—to lead. Is this where the intensity originates? Is intensity the relationship of *agogos* with children, leading them to the experience? To be pedagogical is to know when to intervene and when to hold back (see van Manen, 1991). Dwelling in this notion of pedagogy was an intense lived experience for Kelly.

As Kelly told the story of their survival outing, he used other descriptors to capture the centrality of the intensity: "You felt for them. You felt their cold, their fear, their discomfort, their doubt, and their depression when they felt they could not make it till morning." Kelly continued: "You wanted to hold them, comfort them, but that would take them out of the experience. You had to lead them to their self confidence and determination that they can do this!" Kelly noted this process was almost painful to witness, hurtful because of the distance to morning and finishing the survival assignment. From my own experiences teaching Physical Education students winter survival skills, I can also attest that there is the experience of a shared, intense connection. Before sunrise, many students are in what we call the *funk*; they feel hopeless and beaten by the cold and lack of sleep. But then the exhilaration comes when they see their world brighten, and the sun begins to connect them to their strength reserves. The intensity is partly due to being so connected with them through the low, and then riding a high with a group of kids. Kelly remarked: "This was an intense connection between emotion and the world that created the feeling. We all saw it when we re-gathered as a class outside the woods. The kids can see the experience of surviving the night in Nova Scotian woods written all over each others' faces." I, too, have experienced the immediate burst of the telling and sharing of stories of surviving the night, shared with anyone who would listen. All the students want to listen and tell, all at the same time.

The students are uncomfortable, the place is away from school and home, and, unfortunately, they are not very familiar with natural places in their world. I think that experience—being in a natural place, being a little unfamiliar, a little uncomfortable, but having someone there who can take them through the process of surviving with nothing—builds trust at a magnified level that is not possible in a classroom setting. It is definitely more intense. Outside, during a survival lesson, there is a focus, an undeniable purpose and a realization of authenticity—the immediate consequences of not cooperating with the natural world. Kelly shared his perception that actions are pretend in a classroom—*not real*, in a sense. Outside is not pretend. You have to deal with your wet feet. Could the intensity be in the teacher's bridging lessons of survival from classroom theory to the outside world of the student? As the teacher, I cannot help but share in the experience of this intense real-world connection, the cause and effect in learning that occurs between the student and the natural world.

Pedagogical Focus

In a natural environment, not designated as school, I became aware of another sensation far removed from Foucault's (1979) normalizing surveillance. Teaching outside provided lived experiences that made visible my "non-thetic self consciousness" (see Sartre, 1984, p. 347) as a teacher. Outside, not only did I become aware of another way of teaching, I rediscovered an environment rooted in childhood experiences that percolate with intense learning moments. As a teacher in the outdoors, I can attest to Sartre's existential possibility that "there is no self to inhibit my consciousness … I am a pure consciousness of things" (p. 347). Outside, there is an intense exchange between the student and teacher, a pure awareness of this heightened consciousness. Does the intensity lie in being a teacher in the natural world, in *being-seen-by-another*—the student—who, in turn, shares in the state of natural learning? Outside the school, both students and teacher witness the power of learning by doing. The connection between the student and the teacher could be as Sartre suggests it is, for the recognition of the presence of a person is "the fundamental connection in which the Other is manifested in some way other than through the knowledge I have of him" (p. 340). In the look for both student and teacher, they acknowledge more than the fact of being fully alive. The connection in the look "suddenly" presents the person as an object, and the appearance of this person has the ability to appropriate "the world from me. Everything is in place; everything still exists for me" (Sartre, p. 343). In that look, "the Other has not only revealed to me what I was; [but it] has established me in a new type of being.… I needed the Other in order to realize fully all the structures of my being" (Sartre, pp. 302–303). Pedagogy is the ability of teachers to really see their students.

At the moment of seeing, the connections between the teacher and students are intense and unmistakable feeling. We may say that feelings have two kinds of intensity (Peirce, 1934). One is the intensity of the feeling itself, by which loud sounds are distinguished from faint ones, luminous colors from dark ones, or highly chromatic colors from almost neutral tints. The other is the intensity of consciousness (see Sartre, 1984) that lays hold of the feeling, which makes the ticking of a watch actually heard infinitely more vividly than the explosion of fireworks just heard. Descriptions of intensity find meanings in words of exceptionally great concentration, power, or force (especially in activity), depth (often used in plural), ferociousness, ferocity, fierceness, fury, pitch, severity, vehemence, and violence. Is intensity the result of the pedagogical focus in teaching outdoors? This educational experience is an invested personal process in which the teacher leads those in his or her care towards educational experiences of growth and the challenges of learning.

The intense pedagogical experiences, and the feelings of intensity that occurred, were common to many outside teaching experiences. The feelings of intensity were described in degrees, but the sensation of intensity was nonetheless apparent in the accounts of each of the teachers I interviewed. Bobby and Jamie shared past moments that manifested pedagogical intensity. These lived experiences are as varied and unique as an outside teaching experience. All the teachers I have had conversations with have commented that the outdoors somehow magnifies the teaching, no matter what is unfolding as a lesson. Central, here, is how this magnification applies to the relational aspect of outside teaching.

Lost & Found

The outside offers variables that tax us as people in different ways and that do not always arise out of the intense need for survival. Intense still are the challenges that teachers and students experience outside the school, but as an entire class. Bobby recalled a moment of *color and choice* that brought his class in touch with achievement. When the challenges are real, physically demanding, and require mental commitment, the emotional release can be profound. I wonder whether, in the next anecdote, it was the challenge of the climb that was an intense experience, or whether it was the cold and the exertion of trudging through the snow that made the moment intense. Or did the intensity lie in the moment of putting on mismatched pink and blue hats with neon mitts, and polka dot scarves? Jamie recalled the students were just taking whatever from the lost found box; there were no boundaries. They just wanted to be warm. That day when the class was supposed to restock the feeders for the bird count, but the kids did not want to be outside because it was just too cold compounding the deep-snow base on the trail.

> We hiked up the back mountain—really just a big hill at the back of the school (see Figure 14). Half way to the summit the trees thin out, the wind was stronger, and the snow deeper because of the drifting. The snow on me is up to my waist, which means on kids it is up to their chest. We had

to decide whether to go for the summit, finish our jobs, or turn around. So they had to make that choice: Do we want to go for something that we know is possible, just extremely hard, but maybe impossible because of the physicality for some, or do we pack it in and turn around? The outdoors presented a challenge that was not in the plan, but I left it to them. The feeders were a class responsibility, but I would have fully understood their wanting to return because the wind-chill was bitter. They wanted me to make the decision, but this time it was theirs. I said I would follow. The debate to go or not was just as hard as the remaining climb. They decide to bag the summit. It was intensely hard work, but it was full of laughter, camaraderie, support, snow-play, and determined drive. The commitment seemed to come from nowhere. Just previous to this, they were a bunch of kids that wanted to stay inside where it was warm. I was not just instructing that experience, I was in that experience because I had to help plough the group to the top. When we all made it to the summit that was the peak experience. I saw something in myself and in those kids that day that made us feel extraordinary. I still do not know what was so significant about that walk in the snow, but it was intense. We floated

Figure 14: This is the hillside from Bobby's account. Photograph by A. Foran.

> effortlessly down the hill after we checked and filled the feeders. There was something in us now that made us feel so alive, so powerful, so excited, and so together. (Bobby, Biology teacher)

What was lost and what was found as a result of teaching outdoors? For the teacher, it seems, intensity is pedagogically connected to the moment between offering students the power to exercise the decision making for the group. Bobby recalled that the remainder of the evening, before the parents arrived, was different: the discussions were different, the relationships were different, and the students just kept talking about the hike again and again, reliving each step. Bobby revealed that, as a class, they went through a remarkable event and that that experience will not easily be forgotten. This was a shared moment, different for each student and for the teacher. Each story told by the student was unique to the child, but Bobby did identify one unifying element: the moment was intense. As an outdoor educator, I am well aware that this does not happen every time you go outdoors. Sometimes circumstances make that intensity a real possibility, but as an instructor you must be able to see that possibility and then decide if the moment is appropriate for the class, that they will be able to capture it.

The release of intensity may very well have occurred in the game of avalanche. Play is a powerful motivator. How many times do teachers stop spontaneous play indoors? The outdoors has a wonderful way of providing possible moments of release. The intensity could also have emanated from the group decision: the students' determined focus to reach the feeders. For Bobby, the intensity could be living the moment with the children directly. Pedagogically, the intensity in an experience for a teacher might lie in the decision to grant students the responsibility of exercising choice about their learning, and then leading them in following through with that decision. Central to this lived experience, in any event, is the teacher's participation in the heart of the shared adventure. As Bobby stated, "I'm not just teaching the struggle; we were experiencing the intensity together."

Surprise

Jamie recalled a different pedagogical intensity, one that was personal but still connected to class experience during an Oceans 11 day trip to Shut-In Island, St. Margaret's Bay, exploring tidal zones. Jamie referred to the outdoors as powerful and linked this power to the simple realizations prompted by the little surprises in life. The outdoors reminds one that that surprises are found everywhere, and for Jamie the intensity grew from the realization that such surprises can provide teachable moments, teach powerful life lessons.

> In the outdoors surprises have a way of showing up—you never know what you are going to stumble across. You do not know what the environment is going to bring. Outside, there are a number of different things that all of sudden make what you have planned change in little or dramatic ways.
>
> On that day, I was with the Oceans class teaching them a few basic strokes and were practicing the draw stroke. I stopped at a good spot for our discussion. I brought them in and asked how they felt the draw stroke went. I was trying to get some feedback, but this one girl had her hand down in the water; she was playing with something. So I specifically asked

> her how she did with the draw stroke. She said, "I don't know, but look at this." She had a clear, spongy, jelly substance that she found in the water. It was sort of an egg of some kind, but no one knew what it was. It was striated like a pumpkin. There was something inside it. It was just like jell-o. She passed it to everybody. Everyone was in awe of this thing. The Oceans teacher did not even know what it was. This thing was far more interesting than the draw stroke and this student did offer at the end of the show and tell that her draw stroke was pretty damn good!
>
> She did not care about her draw stroke at that point. She found something of intense interest. She captured the moment by captivating everybody's interest—she was the teacher. Unfortunately, no one knew what the thing was, but for that moment we intensely focused on what this student was teaching, the surprise of the non-lesson. (Jamie, At-risk Support teacher)

What is a surprise? Hoad (1996) deciphers *surprise* to mean a sudden attack in which the person is overcome and overwhelmed by desire (p. 475). This is a sudden assailing of a person within a moment, and for Jamie this teachable moment was pedagogically intense. Surprise is more than the feeling of the unexpected (Hoad, p. 475). In the right context, this sudden, unplanned moment can intensely involve those within the lived experience. According to Jamie, the flotilla of students was "utterly absorbed in a moment that had nothing to do with my lesson plan." Jamie was not resentful of the interruption, for it was what many teachers refer to as a genuine teaching moment. The outdoors has a way of providing these moments of focus, the surprises for learning, and brings pedagogy right into the hands of teachers. There have been many times when I was captivated by a lesson indoors, but the outdoor-teachable moment has a way of sweeping the class away in the natural world, in an unpredictable way that engages curiosity.

Jamie remarks that the power and intensity of outdoor teaching is amazing. It eliminates the containment and staleness of a classroom by removing the structure of a classroom. First, Jamie notes that going outdoors is novel, and that this is so for students, and for teachers: "I think for a lot of kids, they are doing something that they have not done before. That is neat in itself and, the barriers of the classroom are removed." Jamie further observes, "Outdoors is not just a pencil and paper thing. You don't get that level of surprise in the classroom because inside it is stale. It is too structured; it's all in the books." A teachable moment can be achieved indoors through class discussion or as a result of reading the text, but outdoors, a teachable moment—the clear, jelly-like pumpkin thing—can be picked up and held—and is thus unlike a book because it is beyond the abstractions of text (Burkholder, 2003, p.22). The intensity of the surprise is held in the hand and is a direct experience.

A teacher and class connected through a shared fascination; bonded in a moment of learning. Does direct experience heighten the shared learning experience between teachers and their students as more relational? For Jamie there was speculation, and a conscious revealing of ignorance on the part of the teacher (attended by the human vulnerability of not knowing, a relinquishing of teacherly authority) that makes the learning process a shared act. Jamie recognized the importance of allowing this student space on the water to show, to teach, and to share in the teaching. Jamie recognized the appropriateness and value of the moment of surprise. In school, a teacher would likely think the student who was focused on the jelly-like entity was simply not paying attention. Outside, however, Jamie refers to the surprise as the moment when "I stop teaching. I can teach the draw stroke in a pool, but you are not going to pick up one of these little spongy, jelly things there." Pedagogically, the intensity of the class's attentiveness allowed Jamie to really focus on the learning interests of the students.

Tensions: Pedagogy and Risk Magnifying the Lived Experience

In the anecdotes of these teachers, I continue to struggle to find a language to create meaning from what I have experienced as intensity. Needed is an interpretation and deciphering of the nature of intensity is needed to make sense of experiential moments in the concrete world. Etymologically (see Hoad, 1996), the *intendere* experience is one that is too overwrought, constraining, and too much of a stretch from our everyday existence, an extreme focus. I am left wondering, then, if the outdoors in education makes possible to focus the relational experience contributing to a significantly intense connection pedagogically?

An intense moment is often followed by the need to reflect on how the particular moment shapes one's identity. As the moment of intensity subsides, many individuals' reflections edge into personal examination, where they wrestle with and challenge who we were, who we are, and who we want to become. These questions prompt one to focus attention inward, and this can be a deep and personal experience, and intense: exceptional concentration, which involves power or force. Many easily understand intensity in concrete terms that involve an amount or degree of strength of light, heat, or sound within a designated area. In lived experiences in the physical world, intensity is sparked by the degree and level of risk associated with an activity.

Risk, like intensity, is understood in degrees. Even sharing an intense story of personal experience is a risky venture for some. Teachers are no exception: Bobby, Leslie, and Kelly shared glimpses of pedagogical risk. Because of their anecdotes, I am closer to identifying the degrees of risk associated with pedagogy when the teaching experience occurs outside the school. The risk generated outside requires more than an examination of risk management—which is not to deny the importance of assessing the care and diligence that must be at the core of outdoor practices; it requires attention to the relational elements found in teachers' leading outdoor learning. For these teachers, risk seems to generate a bond that connects them intensely to their students because they were outside. Does the outdoors somehow magnify the pedagogical aspect of teaching children?

Water Pennies

For many teachers risk and uncertainty exist with any lesson plan, inside or out. Liddle (1998) observes that the focus on risk management permeates research into outdoor education, but that risk is essential to the learning process and crucial for the "maintenance of the human spirit … [so] that we may fully experience life" (p. 61). However, it goes without saying, that if an injury or death resulted from any learning venture, any school board would deny future prospects. Hence, risk is managed. When heading outside, risk is ever present in the consciousness of teachers. But the focus on risk does not center exclusively on the children, because while teachers are a part of the pedagogical relationship, they are also human and cannot remove themselves from exposure to risk when engaged in living experience. Part of the risk teachers face revealing to the class the vulnerabilities that even teachers face when leading classes outside.

> I had taken my Foundation Sciences 10 class down to the river and of course the big thing was, let's throw in Mr. B. Right! Our lesson was aquatic life, and this outing was my introduction to the unit. We were trying to find water pennies. After a brief description, off they went looking, trying to answer with concrete proof, "what is a water penny?" So they looked under rocks, sticks, leaves, everything, and eventually they started to find these things under the rocks. Now I am getting as carried away as well as they are. The water is probably a little deep considering it was still late spring. I roll up my pant legs and I walk onto the log from an old tree that had fallen across—spanning the banks. I got real excited for I think I see something down there on the riverbed. I am squatting and rolling up my shirtsleeve to reach down. Now I am on my knees, balancing on this log, reaching, and stretching my fingers. I felt like I was about to dislocate my shoulder, my fingers just about touched, and down I went. It was roar time for the kids, for in I went: a full dunk. After I pulled myself out, I started laughing with them instead of getting all upset. They found water pennies and I found my ego. They will always remember the time I fell in the river. They might remember the water pennies we found. But that's the risk in going outdoors. I suppose we risk being more human

> outdoors. The risk is students' seeing us for what we are, who we are. Now that is a big risk. (Bobby, Biology teacher)

As teachers, we have all had moments when we were the focus of unwanted or humorous attention. By going outdoors, we are inviting more of these uncertain opportunities; we are just as vulnerable to the environment as the students are. Teachers will try to control outdoor learning through the structure of a well-planned lesson, but the environment can have real consequences for teachers because of the unpredictability of being in the outdoors. Bobby took these moments in stride, but he realized that outside means we have to be more forgiving of ourselves. Is there risk when students see us as people and not solely as the authority figure attached to the institution? Some students may have difficulty separating the teacher from the job or the building and have a struggle to imagine teachers living lives distinct from the school. To show that part of being human is risky, and Bobby attributes this vulnerability to being seen as fully human when we are outdoors.

Bobby understands the outdoor distinction as a "threat that always looms over the entire class. Going outdoors is a constant walking of a tightrope. I know that risk is just one step behind me." Managing risk requires the teacher to peek into the future and anticipate the events that could bring harm to students. I am sure indoor lessons are not planned with the same intense degree of practical concern. Yet, knowing that there are risks makes the upcoming, unknown series of events an exciting prospect. If there were no risk, would the outdoors experience be worth it? The outdoors has a way of forcing our awareness to contemplate possibilities that intensify the pedagogical relationship.

X Marks the Spot!

Leslie raised important questions during our conversations: "Why do I invite more risk in teaching? I could just stay inside and focus on my subject. Why do I go out there in the first place? This is something that I have struggled with for a while now." Leslie has experienced risk in a different way. Vulnerability is central to Leslie and Bobby's experiences, but Leslie confronted the reality of living risk when students were at the center of the event. Leslie experienced risk concretely as a gamble teachers take with children. Wanting students to experience more becomes a calculated risk when the outdoors becomes the context in which the educational scene is set. A teacher can establish reasonable safeguards, and can have backup plans and support personnel, but safety still comes down to managing something that is next to impossible to control: the world. Once students are out of sight, teachers grapple with the reality of intense pedagogical concern for their students.

> For the final Geography 10 exam students had to demonstrate they were able to use a map and compass outside the classroom. They were given a map and compass and, with a partner, each had to arrive at a predetermined grid reference. I organized the students into travelling groups and followed at a distance, relatively out of sight until I knew they were on course (see Figure 15). Then I silently left them to finish their trek on their own. Forty minutes after the last group went into the woods and were checked off by my fellow teacher at destination X waiting for the groups to arrive, this group had still not found their way out. I could not understand the delay for the return time was a maximum of twenty minutes

and the other teacher was there to check them off and send them on their way via the school trail. I had clearly marked the exit path all the way back to school with orange flagging tape, and the students knew to follow the long strands along the trail. I started to worry and felt a sinking feeling. I recognized that I had put these kids into a situation that I now had no immediate control over. My mind was flashing: "Where were they? Are they alright?" With each passing minute I felt more helpless and less in control. I was afraid for my students because I knew that I would not want to be lost in the woods. The other teacher and I began to coordinate a search of the back woods by two-way radio. I did not have a clue about where to start looking. The world is so big. The more time that passed, the less control I had and the more intensely anxious I became because time meant more space between my kids and me. It was not a matter, at that point, of *why* they missed the trail back, or even about passing or failing the exam—it was about them, their safety, and their well-being. The world does not come with big Xs to mark our place. (Leslie, Geography teacher)

Figure 15: The start of the exit trail at Leslie's school. Photograph by A. Foran.

Fortunately, Leslie concluded the experience on a positive note. A male voice was heard on the two-way radio, and stated he had found a group of three girls in the woods very wet and frightened. Leslie notes that despite the responsibility and the risk associated with going outdoors, "the real risk is never facing the outside." During our conversation, Leslie puzzled about why she even bothered to take students outdoors. Her conclusion, after much deliberation, was as follows: "This question is always in my mind, and the best self-response is if they are going to use a map and compass and get lost, and know how to use their skills, it is not going to be in the classroom: it will be outdoors. Obviously, [being] inside the four walls is nice and comforting. It is secure."

As teachers we must be prepared to instruct and risk as a part of teaching. For Leslie, the risk of losing control obviously outweighed the benefits of sitting in a controlled, comforting classroom. To experience mapping and the use of a compass, the woods provide the classroom of choice; pedagogically, Leslie felt it was appropriate to challenge students in this authentic and practical way. For Leslie, not entering the woods proved just as risky pedagogically. Geography is about a world study. What does it say about teaching if one avoids being in the world and fears parts of that study?

As I probe Leslie's account of what she experienced pedagogically. Leslie recalls: "They risked during that exam—more of a risk than writing a two-hour sit down. It was a risk for them to sign up for this, because the map and compass choice was an alternative that many students have never experienced. It was a risk for them to try this other type of exam." However, for Leslie the implications of that risk varied:

> That one episode could cause administration to say that is it; there is no more of that outside stuff! You can still meet the outcomes by giving them a paper, pencil,

> compass, and map exam. One incident will shut my curricular approaches down! So the consequences are huge because that incident involves kids' lives, not curriculum.

Brown (1998) points out that with outdoor programming, educators must be aware constantly of maintaining a balance between benefits and risks (p. 71). For Leslie, an outdoor pedagogy is shaped by the tension generated by the need to balance risks and outcomes. To think otherwise is to negate the value in risks associated with the outdoors.

Panic

Brown (1998) points out that with risk as a concept and experience, the virtual response of others is magnified when children are involved (p. 74). Sometimes teaching outdoors requires a decision to face risk head on with children in tow. Kelly allowed his class the opportunity to confront risk during a simple paddling lesson for Physical Education 12. As the teacher, Kelly still controlled general choice for the class, but viewed any given moment as valuable to the growth of students pursuing outdoor activities. Confronting risk in this way is, understandably, difficult to emulate indoors and within the confines of a classroom. Sometimes the natural environment can make the risk seem greater than it is even though the situation is under control. However, control can easily be lost and risk is inherent in the outdoors. Risk can lead to consequences, and as outdoor teachers our decisions are determined by whether or not we can live with the ramifications of the decisions made there, making it all the more intense. As Kelly observed in conversation, "Teaching outside is the reality of loosing control, and I am not talking about classroom management here."

I was on the back harbor with my class. The water here is calm, glassy, so still, so safe, the perfect place to teach flat-water paddling, but our lesson was coastal paddling. They were a cocky group. I asked if they felt ready to head out into open water: a resounding YES! They would have paddled to England that day. Looking beyond the sand bar, I can see St. George's Bay is kicking up a bit with a small chop. I knew it was going to be a hard paddle. There were diagonal waves coming in the mouth of the harbor. As well, the tide was going out, against the wind, which created much larger waves than the group could handle.

Boat after boat headed for the channel. As the students hit the chop, they were being tossed around. I still allowed them to head out into the Bay. Most made it, but two canoes flipped over. Immediately the closest boats move into rescue mode. One canoe is emptied with the paddlers hanging onto stable boats, but the other canoe is heading out to sea. The unutilized boats head for shore, a mere 12 meters away from the channel.

This tested the group beyond their capacity, and some could not handle the genuine-intense panic. My students felt like somebody could die. And they reacted so. The empty canoe floated out to about 150 meters off shore to calmer water. PFD's [personal floatation devices] were on. It was sunny and warm and I knew nobody was going to die.

The outdoors is a powerful teacher; there are no false life lessons out here. The students did not deal with it well at the time; they let panic take over and that was real risk, losing your head and losing control. It was

> an intense learning experience for everyone about judging, managing, and thinking decisions through. People were scared. Panic happens because we spend so much of our time sheltering us from life [that] we never learn how to deal with something. Capsizing is part of an experience that deals with water travel, hard to learn that lesson in the classroom. (Kelly, Physical Education teacher)

Looking back, Kelly states that the decision to allow the group to go out would stand. “If I go outside to teach them paddling, then why should I shelter them from the consequences of life?” Kelly positions that the experience was perceived risk, and because of the heightened challenge the students have learned that paddling in choppy surf is some thing that must be carefully considered in future. Kelly feels that because of the experience their sense of ability is fairly determined, and have a better handle on living and assessing risk factors. Kelly determined that this risk could be used as a powerful teaching experience for a cocky group of students. The lessons from such a moment can have lifelong ramifications. Kelly allowed the students to benefit from a moment of perceived risk; Kelly’s skill level, coastal experience, and the actual conditions were factors that contributed to minimal risk. Kelly questions:

> If they never experience the realities of what can happen when paddling open water, when will they ever learn to respect challenging waters? Will they ever learn to assess their own risk levels? If I never allow them to experience these conditions, am I just setting them up for some future disaster? I would not be much of a teacher then!

In the eyes of the students, they were living a moment of panic, but for pedagogical purposes the event was under control and the lesson was worth the risk involved. The learning during this controlled water challenge will have future implications for these students as they continue their outdoor pursuits. In Kelly's judgment, only open water could supply a learning experience that allowed students to engage with risk, challenge, and adversity, and the benefits of this encounter. Kelly's decision to allow the group to paddle choppy waters was based on his assessment of what was in the best interests of impressionable students; Kelly refused to practice a false pedagogy. Kelly did not engage with outdoors teaching for the sole purpose of experiencing nature's wonder and beauty; nature provided the opportunity to experience, in relative safety, some of the rawness the world has in store for all of us.

Risk is usually equated with and assessed in terms of the corporeal experience of damage to the body: how much could this hurt me? When going outdoors, I am sure teachers ask how students could be hurt, as a preventative measure. How often is this question asked of an indoor class experience? Kelly perceives that risk exists in not allowing students to experience genuine consequences. "The desk is the vehicle that shelters kids from life," asserts Kelley; "Then they leave only ever hearing or reading about dangers. We fail them because they panic to the point [that] they lose control." I am curious if risk is an essential component in determining the degree of experiential intensity associated with many outdoor challenges and pursuits.

A Place of Pedagogical Risk

To follow Rousseau's (1762/1969) advice, found in educating Emile, to bring children into the outdoors invites a natural challenge that is appropriate in growth for young people. However, as I have discovered, the heightened awareness for safety, control, and to learn lessons *out there* places a greater focus on the relationship, which becomes an intense connection between instructor and student. This connection could very well derive from the awareness of the outdoor environment, and the intensity that grows from the awareness of the student growth, risk, and excitement makes up hands-on learning, combined with the pedagogical distance inherent in leading that only allows the teacher to watch, look, and hope.

In my conversations with other teachers, who shared numerous stories that encompassed the powerful events of their lives, the word *intense* was often used to capture the experience. In the aftermath of a shared experience, the expressions "That was intense!" "What a rush of adrenaline!" and "Amazing!" are familiar and common phrases. It seems the word *intense* conveys an immediate and accessible understanding when used to describe an event. But why is one experience more intense than another? Many of the teachers in my study accept the descriptive term and acknowledge intensity as central to their outdoor experiences. Was this intensity due in part to the risk, perceived or not that is associated with going outdoors?

Sometimes teachers highlight risk more than is necessary in any life setting. Consequently, the preoccupation with risk becomes the experience more than the actual activity. Teaching in the outdoors is a prime example of where this occurs. I believe teachers do need to mediate life's risks for their students, to the extent possible. I can focus on many physically active tasks in outdoor-adventure education or on numerous indoor activities and still remain risk free. There are just as many risks when teaching indoors, but they differ in quality from those experienced outdoors. Pedagogical risk, then, must be determined by the extremes of a given experience's intensity. Therefore, the word *risk* describes the magnitude of an experience that falls outside the boundaries of everyday living and can include moments of heightened focus, of being-in-the-moment.

Perhaps the insight of intensity was caused by his recognition of the risk inherent in his outdoor teaching—not risk due to immediate risk of injury or death, but the pedagogical weight of responsibility that exceeded the classroom experience. Do outside teachers feel a burden of genuine care? To engage in learning *out there* requires more of them as professionals and as people; it is not a simple act. This is not to say that teaching indoors is easier. Rather, the outdoor experience brought these teachers an understanding of what *in loco parentis* means educationally.

MacKay (1984) legally positions *in loco parentis* as follows: "Teachers and administrators stand in loco parentis (in the place of the parent) with respect to students. This is the basis for the long-established view that teachers have the same rights as parents. Authority arises from the need to maintain order and to act for the welfare of the students" (p. 85). Perhaps the urgency that underscores Bobby's concern is that the students see, want, and expect more of their teachers when outdoors. *The Code of Ethics*, published by the Nova Scotia Teachers Union (2004), states in the section entitled Teacher and Pupil, "The teacher should assume responsibility for the safety and welfare of his/her pupils, especially under conditions of emergency" (p. 1). Although emergency was not at the center of our discussions about teaching outside, the concern teachers felt went well beyond the everyday in-class experience. Bobby commented emphatically, "With every class I brought to the outdoors, I felt an intense urgency, care, protection, responsibility, [and] compassion, and my relationship to these kids was something I just took for granted." The outdoors highlighted the urgency of pedagogy before the practicality of the lesson. Indoors, the focus on risk is conceived of only as *the big if*—should something happen. But outside there is intense concern and felt responsibility for the care for the students.

On many occasions during our conversations, these teachers expressed the thought, "it is just me" out there, the "final decision" about significant concerns rested with the instructor; the role of the teacher became one of "parenting," and the class came to be like family. Significantly, all the teachers I interviewed make direct or indirect comments about the fact that they were often uncertain, and at times intensely worried, about whether or not it was even permissible to go outdoors with a group of children. This concern would inevitably creep into their thoughts as they planned their outdoor lessons. Why has this current of thoughts entered into the consciousness of teachers? Going outside, after all, is not a common teaching strategy, and the range of risks students and teacher are exposed to are greater. I remember one teacher commenting, "Anything can happen out there." And she was right! "Out there" is open to many learning possibilities and unknowns.

Is there any evidence, positive or negative, impacting the teaching act outdoors versus indoors? It seems to me that if it were simply nice to sit on a lawn, it would be mighty tempting for students to pay even less attention to a class discussion. Are there specific difficulties associated with outdoor teaching vis-à-vis students with physical disabilities or medical problems? I am thinking, for example, of students with asthma, airborne allergies, orthopedic problems, or possible skin ailments (e.g., drug-induced photophobia [a side effect of some psychotropic medications], genetic skin cancer risks). Might a student with these concerns confront pressure from classmates to accede to a teacher's proposal to go outside in light of other students' desire to accept the offer to leave the classroom? These are a few of the concerns that were raised in my inservices for teachers as I encouraged them, as Bobby did, to take their practices outside. I am very aware of the practical concerns that are raised, and I have become more aware of the pedagogical commitment that results from my taking children outdoors.

The word *intense* is often used to describe a corporeal encounter. However, there are intense experiences that occur outside the bodily domain. Intensity can be the consequence of social interactions, as Bobby's class discovered, and encounters of positive or negative exchanges can escalate into an intense moments, as did Kelly's survival experience. The more one questions and examines the nature of an intense experience, the more it becomes apparent that time is inexorably woven into the phenomena—like Jamie's unplanned surprises that were part and parcel of teaching outdoors. As an outdoor educator, I am often left with questions about the experience of intensity: how does an experience build into something that we deem intense? How long does intensity have to last for an experience to be classified as intense? Is intensity dependent on a specific environment? Can moments of intensity occur any where at any time? Do we artificially create these definable experiences through language, or is intensity just a word used to capture an inarticulate but remarkable experience?

Some experiences may very well not feel intense as they were lived. We may identify them as intense for the purpose of making sense of experiences that occurred beyond our normal being-in-the-world. Being outside the school, for example, is not the norm in teaching. Therefore, teaching outside may seem intense because it is novel, as Jamie suggested. Through language, we struggle to recapture the fleeting moment of the experiential and name the primordial, pre-reflected moment; we name the spectacular of the experience. However, I am curious about why the outside teaching moment is really intense. The events on their own, without the involvement of children, may not carry the same intensity for these teachers. However, this does not account for all the internal-intense sensations generated by teaching outdoor education.

When reflecting on personal-definable moments, I am challenged by what I once thought of as intense and I must question whether or not there are specific types of experiences that can be truly intense. Can any lived experience be intense? Or is intensity reserved for the extremes that one witness others living, like the climbers of Everest, those who run white water in an open canoe, the surgeon performing open-heart surgery, or the actor performing an emotional scene live on stage? How those engaged on the mountain, around the operating table, or on stage classify their experiences is worth considering, for some people partake in these activities as their-being-in-the-world—their everyday experience. Again, teaching for the most part is an everyday indoor experience. This raises a point about how far outside normal mode of existence people must stray before an experience can be called intense. In their everyday lives, many people might stumble through intensity only to realize much later in the day the magnitude of that particular moment. Some would claim that the moment of intensity, in the "here and now," (see Merleau-Ponty, 1962) is so powerful that there is no point in questioning the impact of the experience. Do you have to know a moment is intense *now* for it to be accurately assessed as an intense experience, or can it emerge as understanding later on when reflecting on the event?

When assessing the risk of an outdoor activity, my focus centers on *how to be in a place* outside with kids. There is no denying the risk inherent in teaching away from the support, comfort, and controlled environment of school. What is a pedagogical relationship that is based on risk, whether calculated or not, perceived or not? It is true that a well-led learning endeavor does not just *happen* to the student; instead, the risk of pedagogical intent is planned (van Manen, 1991). In adventure activities, students "learn best, are willing to extend and risk themselves in an educational environment that is experienced as safe and secure" (van Manen, p. 58). This is possible only if the instructor has created a *place* of pedagogical action and tactful understanding where students can trust, care, and support one another as they push limits and risk, in the adventure of the activity, in order to become a community in the outdoors. Van Manen notes times when learning is painful and consequential learning includes anxiety, stress, and degrees of difficulty. Van Manen says:

> Yes, to live at all is in some sense to live in difficulty. Rather than make everything in life easy, we may need to restore some of life's difficulty to provide for positive challenge, risk, adventure, encounter, and for coming to terms with consequential questions and human issues. (p. 194)

Meaningful education is not something that can be easily packaged. Does the risk of the pedagogical experience reside in the difficulty of the activity or within the relationships between students and teacher? The uncertainty of the result the students will achieve involves an intense waiting, hoping, and desire to do it for them and to accomplish the activity. Almost certainly, some teachers, inside or outside, rob students of learning experiences by ending the process with an excuse or by providing the answer because the risk proved too great for the *teachers*. Do teachers experience risk because they are trapped in a relational quandary that does not allow students to face risk? Pedagogy requires risk; it requires leading and allowing students to engage in an experience that will, hopefully, allow them to grow in a positive way. Even though Jamie, for example, stood on the sidelines of the experience, he became a part of this outdoor community. Jamie may have been a bystander, but he was knee deep in the mud as well, living the struggle in discomfort. Gadamer (1992) makes the following observation:

> It cannot be known in advance whether the experiences to be had en route may outweigh the journey's end in their eventual importance and impressiveness. Nor can one know in advance whether the journey may change one utterly, in body or in mind. In this particular sense, it is clear that life itself is an adventure. (p. ix)

We all have a need to belong in this adventure, even within pedagogical uncertainty. Is it the uncertainty, the waiting, and the turmoil of pedagogical hope that constitutes the intense experience of educational risk in the outdoors?

CHAPTER 8

CURRICULUM OF REALISM

It was Lea and the pole, Lea and her goals, Lea and her fears: Lea was afraid of climbing. I was connected to her struggle. I love climbing, but I was afraid for her. It was an excruciating climb. I could see each limb shaking until finally the lower leg lifted. It was a blind searching with the foot for the next clip. She was shaking her hands because of the grip on the metal clips; they are so cold, even on a warm day. Then her lower leg start trembling; the trembles are so hard to control once they start. The pole becomes your whole world and by the top, you own it; some even taste it with a kiss of gratitude. I knew Lea could do it. 10 more clips, 8, 6, 4, 2 … her hand is on the top and She says, "I'm … jumping." I was not expecting this, but at the moment I had this swelling of fear. I know my voice was shaky when I said, "Okay Lea, now when you are ready, step up from the last clip and put one foot at a time onto the top of the pole." Standing on the last two clips, the final step is a wild sensation; you feel out of control trying to stand on a circular-surface area smaller than your feet. I could have sworn when she pushed upward for the last step that she was falling to the side. It was as if the wind pushed her back up. She made it! She was on top of the Pamper Pole.

I remember her saying, "Oh my God, it's moving! Every time the wind blows the pole moves. If I move, it wiggles. It's got to stop." I was feeling everything she was. There was more connecting Lea and I than the belaying rope that tethered us to her climb. Then Lea informs me that she was going to do the jump! She was so afraid. She stood there for the longest time just staring at that bar hanging in front of Merlin's sign. Lea started muttering, "I'm scared. I am really scared! Why am I doing this? I am crazy!" I asked her if she still wanted to make the jump. With her slow yes came a strange feeling. I knew it was not her fear. It was mine; I was afraid for her. She was ready; her arms were stretched out, her fingers pointing to the trapeze bar two and a half meters out. I had everything set, but remember the strongest feeling that something was out of place. "Ready to jump!" "On-belay!" "Jumping …""Jump AWAY …" (see Figure 16) (Jamie, At-risk Support teacher)

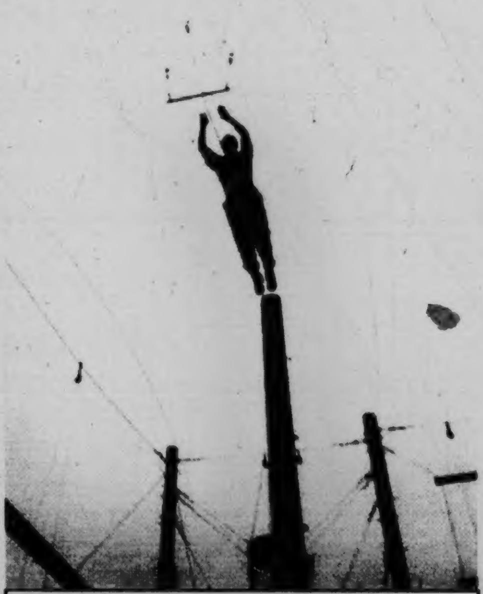

Figure 16: Personal photograph of me jumping from the Pamper Pole. Photograph taken by A. Foran.

Come to the Edge

During our conversation, Jamie recalled a story in which Merlin is saying the words “Come to the edge” to young King Arthur. Jamie repeated these words many times until she uttered the words “and they flew.” Is teaching outdoors coming to an edge and facing fear? Are teachers in the outdoors teaching in fear? If so, then what are we afraid of? Fear may reside in the outdoors, but it is only one of the many emotions and feelings that are part of the student–teacher relationship. Jamie vividly recalled that fear was paramount and central to the relationship, and that moment was a strange sensation. Jamie explained that sensation as the feeling of something different, but not anything wrong that was connected with the climb. Jamie recalled a quick look around Lea’s climbing position atop the pole. Jamie observed an entire class that had stopped. Some were frozen in the middle of their climbs, some were at the top waiting to reppel down, and others were patiently waiting to start. The entire ropes course had come to a standstill in a moment of absolute dedication to Lea’s moment. They were focused intently on only her. And to this day, Jamie has no clear idea of how long the class gave Lea that silent encouragement and support.

I remember my own first jump and seeing the Bay of Fundy and the marshes of Evangeline in the distance. I remember seeing the sign and reading Merlin’s words: “Come to the edge.” Those letters were as big as life. I could hear my heart beating. It was as though my whole body pulsed with every beat. And there was wind up there; the slightest breeze feels like a brewing hurricane that moves the pole, the body, and stirs up fear.

I understand fear when climbing, but how does the outdoors transform fear between student and teacher? The bond between Jamie and Lea was forged in fear, but the pedagogical intent was support—as evident in the silent respect of the entire class in support of Lea's climb. Lea's fear was understandable; anyone who has ever climbed or is even trepidacious of heights could understand her condition. My curiosity rests with Jamie. What was at the root of the fear for this teacher? What does it mean educationally when fear and pedagogy blend together in an act of teaching?

It is only natural to experience fear when on an edge and at a height beyond the limits of comfort. Fear goes beyond perceived risk. Fear becomes real and tangible when it is the feeling that connects one person to another experiencing a shared, personal fear. Jamie reflected: "Fear becomes present as soon as the student chooses to climb or to withdraw from the challenge. Fear seeps, radiates, and connects the climber and the one belaying through an umbilical rope of safety. I can feel their fear—it's so real I almost can touch it." However, given that Jamie was linked to Lea's safety through the rope, why was fear central to the entire pedagogical experience? An outdoor pedagogy could be the projection of our deep and secret fears, as teachers, into our relations with others in our class. Does fear, for Jamie, exist in not knowing the outcome for the climber? This is not a question determined by the physical safety of the student; rather, this question seeks to understand the emotional safety and mental well-being of the student who has decided to climb. Teachers cannot displace or live the fear for their students, but I wonder if they fear along side their students, pedagogically, when students decide to face what frightens them.

The Realness of Fear

Leading students to face risk in the outdoors can become a questionable act in education. What can be said of teachers leading children to confront the ugliness of fear that, at times, is associated with risk? Risk, as it is calculated, perceived, planned, or imagined, is charged with emotional and physical responses that are unique to the individual. This uniqueness makes it difficult to assess the degree of risk experienced by each student. How will students experience risk in the world, and how will teachers see their students pedagogically? The relational aspect in teaching is significant here, for what is imagined or real about risk and fear could stem from one's insecurities and limit possibilities for the child.

The imagination draws individuals into a world that many cannot control, a world of fears that victimize one's daily existence. However, fear, for some, is very real. I recall telling my children many times that they had nothing to be afraid of in a dark room, but my words did not make their fear any less real. Similarly, sensing fear that is associated with the vastness of the outside world can prevent people living to the fullest. Fear of the outdoors might keep people from wanting to go outdoors. Understanding fear can be elusive and difficult to grasp and is mostly a gut response to an external event. Fears are also a complexity of existence, because people cope with or shut out fear in so many ways, and minimize the opportunities to face fear. Merleau-Ponty (1962) posits that "Between a sensation and myself there stands always the thickness of some primal acquisition which prevents my experience from being clear of itself … the sensation … which runs through me without my being the cause of it" (p. 151). Is there a specific sort of fear rooted in outdoor education that engenders a constant pathic connection between teacher and student? I know of no schoolroom that could provide me with absolute comfort and security; however, in the outdoors I experienced moments when I faced fear—my own and students'—and this experience went far beyond the insecurity of the classroom. How can a teacher position oneself pedagogically when bringing students to the possibility of experiencing fear associated with many outdoor activities? Jamie, Leslie, Jody, and Kelly have shared moments when they, too, have faced fear that was real, but in the terms of this study, recognized that fear as concretely relational. A common understanding of fear, for the outside teacher, is that remaining indoors equates with safety. When facing the vastness of the world, to not expect fear would be naive. Being in the world means learning to understand fear will be part of this existence. Teaching outdoors may signal the acceptance of fear within the learning experience, and pedagogy is the leading and supporting of students as they face what frightens them.

A Quest for Fire

Stripped of control and left exposed and vulnerable to the world would, for some, be more than a humiliating experience; finding oneself in this state could be the most fearful experience imaginable. Leslie's anecdote about fire reveals the exposed vulnerability we sometimes experience when we face the outside world. Her experience was not hypothetical or merely potential; rather, the class was in the center of a precarious predicament. That moment in the backcountry was a reminder for Leslie of why the outdoors is feared by many. However, the class met fear, came together, and changed. Fear has a way of changing the pedagogical experience. Is it pedagogically appropriate when teachers knowingly lead students into learning situations where they will encounter real fear?

> Even though we were all scared because of how wet and cold we were, we turned it around. It was a really high point. After a lot of coaxing, the students were successful in starting their fire. What a relief to see those flames licking and dancing over saturated-spunky wood. We had heat, light, and the chance to dry everything out from underneath our tarp. It never stopped raining.
>
> Fear made us vigilant with the fire. I was never so vulnerable as I was at that moment. They were in charge of the fire and, in a sense, their skill and efforts were determining our well-being. Without a fire, we were heading in for an extremely challenging night of survival. When it comes right down to it, we are such a helpless species, but together we can face anything, no matter our fears. We faced one of those fears in backcountry travel, and it was an amazing sense of self-accomplishment in the fact that we did it. (Leslie, Geography teacher)

Perhaps the challenge of appropriateness is found in the balance: how much do I allow a class to face fear before I cross the line of pedagogical sensibility? Leslie, however, did not have a choice, for they faced the fear of what cold and wet can do to the human body—hypothermia. This is an ever-present fear among backcountry enthusiast in any temperate climate. Cold and wetness can kill a wilderness traveller without discrimination. The final result for Leslie's class was positive. The class was successful in securing their survival needs. The fear within this pedagogical experience was a shared event. In addition to leading her students in their learning, Leslie experienced fear no differently than the students. Did this experience allow Leslie to see the importance of relationships more clearly? Does the reality of fear serve to focus our attention and priorities with students? In the moment of facing their fears they came together to take steps to improve their safety and comfort in the night. They were not mere witnesses of fear; they lived and acted *within* a experiential struggle that affected the entire class. They were afraid and had no one to help them but one another.

Leslie ends her account by touching on the importance of the next day. After a long night of patient drying, the class was treated to a beautiful, warming, drying Fall day. Psychologically, the class was more than ready to go: "We were pumped and motivated. Overcoming challenges and dealing with the curve balls in life can really put you on a high. I could not have planned a better lesson in school, but this would not have occurred in my Geography classroom." In school, we teach about what to prepare for; in the outdoors, we are required to meet the lesson head on. Leslie continued: "At first, I was afraid for them and then for myself. I felt like there was nothing I could have done to prevent our predicament. I felt very responsible. As teachers, we always plan for the positive and avoid negative lessons. Fear is something we avoid, but that day I faced it and learned from it because of my students."

Mexican Corn Bread

For many individuals, going outside involves facing real and natural fears, along with the beauty and pleasures the outside world can bring. When I am indoors, within the safety and comfort of my classroom, I can get lost, along with the students, in our work.

That type of being lost occurs when the world falls away and leaves me with a single-minded academic focus. Outdoors, however, there is a real fear of physically getting lost; the world as ever present in its vastness, and every step is a reminder of how big the world is and your mounting uncertainty of just where you are. Jody faced the fear of panic and helplessness. This fear in the outdoors is a lived experience in a moment when a teacher is frantic within a gripping pedagogy—a collapsing world where the welfare of children becomes the sole concern.

> I was on a backpacking trip in the Cape Breton Highlands in Nova Scotian bear country. We had set up camp and we were making a meal. I was monitoring the cooking groups with the other teacher and parent chaperone. In one group the student in charge of supper was making Mexican corn bread, his specialty. As he got the stove going he said, "Hey guys I just have to go use the washroom. I will be back in five minutes. Can someone just watch the bread?"
>
> With endorsement, this kid took the big red war bag (shovel, matches, toilet paper) and called out "Ickshamoobacksmee," which meant you were going to the washroom. He went off by himself and we noted his direction. His bread was finished 10 minutes later, and this kid still was not back. 20 minutes later, he still was not back. I knew something was wrong and all I could think was he was lost?" This is the first time I felt this kind of weight.
>
> After searching for about half an hour, it was starting to get dark, and I was starting to taste the fear that was swelling in me; I was well past

> rational. I was entering into the freaking-out stage and the parent yells to me from the other side of the meadow. When I crossed over to his search group, they showed me the tracks of hiking boots, the dropped shovel, and bear prints right beside his footprints. There were fresh tracks. You could tell they were running. Your heart sinks. You don't want to continue the search because you are scared, but of course you continue.
>
> We continued up the valley with more whistling—two short blasts (meaning search)—breaking and listening—three short blasts (emergency help signal). Finally, we heard a response. When we found him he came down out of the pine tree very upset. I saw my fear in knowing that out here we flirt with our mortality. It's humbling that the outside can reduce us, in seconds, to a quivering leader; we are not the omnipotent beings we think we are. (Jody, History and Mi' Maq teacher)

The outdoors is a reminder of our vulnerable humanity, and the fears inherent in nature have a way of connecting us to what it means to be human. The teacher is supposed to be the person in charge, in control, and the decisive, responsible agent in the classroom. When we take classes outdoors, the context and responsibilities are not as well defined, for we are at the mercy of the natural order. Jody was not fearful of being lost; the fear was rooted in mortality. The missing student was a reminder that many people hide in fear of their own humanity. Humans are fragile when we confront the outdoors, and the social structures of society provide us little protection. The outdoor industry and market place has a way of feeding on people's fears with their marketing strategies: If you have a GPS (Global Positioning System), you will not be lost! However, a GPS will not take care of you when you are running in fear from nature. Jody did not need a GPS; being in that valley meant she was flirting with the world, and so were the students.

As Jody explored the element of pedagogy, she positioned the significance of the student-teacher relationship: "I can't hold their hands every second we are out here. I suppose that means I have to live with the fear when I decide to bring a group outdoors. But the teacher in me wants to protect them first and foremost." In her role as a teacher, Jody discovered that being human has limits, and the fear that teachers must live with, indoors and out, is that we cannot always protect those in our care. Is this the root of fear, pedagogically speaking?

Scary Monsters!

Fear is somehow connected to one's fragility, of powerlessness in the world, and going outside requires confronting one's limitations. Fear might be understood as a reminder of our fragility in the world, and for us as teachers, this could very well be a relational reminder, for we might end up sharing our students' fear. Kelly captures this as living the fear of the unknown with students. Kelly was all smiles and laughter as she recaptured a past moment, but Kelly was adamant about making me see that fear was dominated by every person in the experience of waiting that which frightens us most: what we do not know. As people, we know the outside world less and less. The outcome Kelly identified for teaching outside was that students should remember their face-to-face interaction with the natural world. Kelly noted the power that this face-to-face encounter—or its potential—can have when she recounted a story about the class sitting around the campfire when they heard a grizzly bear or a cougar or a mountain lion or

Sasquatch or a … coming in closer to the camp. Something changes inside people when they wait in fear.

> In Liscomb we heard a screech that sounded like a werewolf. I did not know what it was, and I was scared myself. Rationally we knew it couldn't be a werewolf, but we all ran back under the shelter and pulled out our little jack-knives that are worth nothing against any animal. And we hear it: the werewolf comes closer and closer and then goes away.
>
> Something was going on inside us that was real, that was the sense of pure emotion that happens if we do meet a werewolf face to face. The screeching sound was moving in again and we were speechless. All of us were just frozen, looking trying to see what it was, and when it would attack. Its like if we can see the source of our demise its better somehow. Then the growl came out of the dark and it stopped my heart. There was a long pause holding our breath, and our bodies finally released themselves of the tension for it was gone. There was silence and we were alive!
>
> Because we did not get ripped apart, we could speak of this experience, and laugh about own humanity. Meeting that unknown, the werewolf, connects us with our identity—who we really are in that moment—fragile. The outdoors helps us see who we are; limits and all. We all have to meet a werewolf at some point in life. My werewolf taught me how powerless I really am in protecting these kids. The world is just too big, filled with way too many unknowns. (Kelly, Physical Education teacher)

Kelly found out later from the park ranger, on the way out, that the screech we heard was that of an eastern cougar. The ranger explained that a cougar found the group, came into the area to observe, smell, assess the prey, and then decided that the group was too big. Kelly summarized the moment with the following: "I will never forget the feeling of what it is like to be prey and to have a cougar, a werewolf, stalk you." Kelly commented that, as a teacher, the one aspect that made the outside lesson more real than an indoors lesson was fear: "I know I am powerless because it is impossible to protect my students in all instances, no matter how sound my decisions or polished my skills." The hidden fear of the outdoors surfaces with the werewolf encounter. There are many possible fears that could emerge in outdoor experiences. The uniqueness of Kelly's encounter was that the fear was a shared, lived experience—teacher and students caught in pedagogical fear. As a result, Kelly questioned this moment pedagogically: "Is this going too far? Am I really preparing them to deal with the world? Is the gain going to be worth the experience? Am I living the thrill or they?"

I could place myself easily within any one of Kelly's questions, and still I struggle to find a sensible answer. I find it hard to argue against the idea that the interest of are educators is that students face the world and make life choices that are best for each of them. However, this face-to-face encounter shifts in nature when the class realizes is powerlessness when confronted by the unknown and the powerful. In facing the fear together, Kelly noted a strange bond between students and herself, which prompted Kelly to ask, "Is the strong bond that forms with my classes because of our fear and our facing fears together?" I wonder if there is not, at some level, a hidden fear in teaching that lurks and then surfaces in teachers who bring students to these created experiences, fully aware that the unknown waits for students. Is the unknown in teaching outside simply the unpredictability of the outdoors? I can imagine the worst of dangers going outside, and I could remain forever indoors and tremble with fright from imagined scenarios. This would quash the pedagogical intentions of teachers who shared their lived experiences and who confronted fear in a variety of ways.

Making It Real

Fear is not the only element that allows for *realness* in the outdoors. There is a realness that only being outside and connected to nature can generate to create a totalizing experience. Burkholder (2003) refers to this as *consilience*: To see things in their wholeness: not as abstractions, but as the thing itself and connected to you directly. Similarly, Dewey (1902) also advocated that education should start with a child's interest in concrete, everyday experiences and build on that understanding to connect them with more-formal subject matter. To ensure connections are made to the intended learning, and that the curriculum has relevance, each student participates in experiences drawn from community life and occupations. The curriculum is constructed around exploratory themes, and the student progresses through exploration and discovery (Dewey, 1902).

In the remainder of this chapter, Chris, Jay, Jody, and Kelly relate how they experienced outside teaching as concrete, tangible, and pure, which I summarize here as *making it real*. As is evident in the following anecdotes, these teachers experienced learning that was in not way manufactured or artificial; it was not pre-packaged learning from the box. This is not to imply that inside teaching is a contrived act; rather, the outside allows for an experience that is less artificial. These teachers tell of lived experiences of teaching outside as full experience of senses, mind, and body; these encounters reconnected them to the world and their students in a significant way. By having genuine experiences that are carefully tailored to instruct students in the curriculum and meet the needs of students, connected learning (i.e., connecting self to knowledge) is not left to chance (Dewey, 1916); youth are thus enabled to take their rightful place within society.

Make Believe

By experiencing an authentic education, Dewey believed, students would be able to learn and, when ready for the adult life, they would be better prepared to meet the challenges of the day and make improvements in their world. On this premise alone, one could argue for the inclusion of experiential practices within traditional educational strategies. However, I have not been able to determine if Dewey advocated for a form of education that was instructed entirely out of doors. I position Dewey as an advocate for quality concrete teaching. The teachers I have spoken to here—following the premise of experiential practice—engaged in teaching that was authentic and led to a full pedagogical experience. In Chris's anecdote, outdoor teaching is not the theory of experiential education, but the experience of concreteness, a genuine moment of learning with children in the field. It is this authentic fullness that is captured as a unique pedagogy.

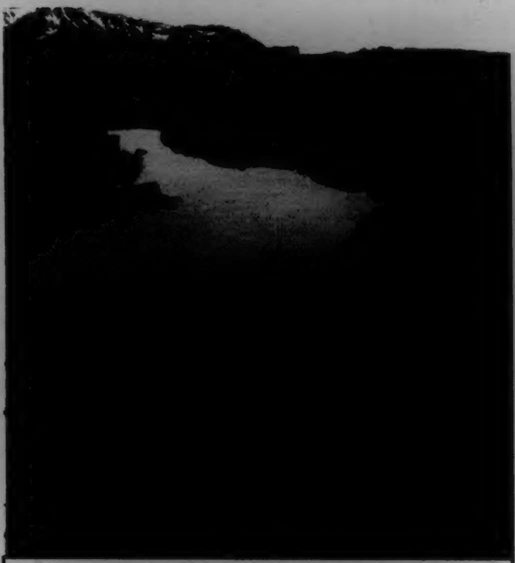

Figure 17: The glacial stream in Thingvellir National Park, Iceland. Photograph by A. Foran.

As I looked down the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, is where North America and Europe achieve the impossible: earth's continental plates pulling, sliding, and pushing apart from one another. They will never become one; pieces of the jigsaw puzzle that make up the earth's crust. The jagged, rocky walls of the divide stood high over a narrow, winding path of cool, clean, calm water (see Figure 17). Gazing down into the water produced the picture of what I could not see in my classroom. The classroom was home to the artificial, the abstract, and at times the make-believe. The reflection was as perfect as looking into a new mirror. This moment was so real I still am not sure who was looking at whom. I was surrounded by and the sounds of cheery voices were talking geography and the silence of this place.

They were pointing out things we learned back home. Iceland was real, now. The looks on their faces told me they were immersed in geography. What was in their heads was now in front of them. All they had to do was reach out, and that is what I wanted for them. There was no end

> to the spectacular landscape. In simple geographic terms, Iceland is a land of rock, snow, and ice. But with those kids it was much more than landforms we studied. I closed my eyes tightly, trying to imprint this moment forever in my memory. The *real* hurts, because I knew I could never bring this moment back for next year's class. I knew I could share this moment, but only in the classroom. (Chris, Geology teacher)

Chris's phrase, "the real hurts" is the articulation of a powerful realization for me: how much I struggle to make the abstract recognizable for my students when I am inside the classroom. Chris was able to experience the geology of Iceland as a living text, and every step brought the class deeper into a living lesson. The realness of the surroundings could not be denied. Chris was captivated by the illusion enabled by the reflection of the glacial flow, and leaving the listener to ponder, with Chris, the question of who was seeing whom. The lived experience of walking the landscape and realizing the lessons of the outside classroom is a powerful moment in teaching. Is not this what we aim to do in education? Make connections for students so that learning is meaningful and becomes a part of them? Was this moment of educative practice what Dewey had in mind? The challenge becomes one of how to move that textured, authentic experience indoors.

I am able to share Chris's desire to make the learning accessible, concrete, and immediate for students. How, then, did Chris experience the element of realness in the learning environment? Did the critical aspect of this pedagogy occur when Chris realized the lesson would and could not be possible inside the school to the extent that it was experienced outside? Chris emphasized the significance of the moment when he remarked, "When I was listening to them and seeing them point out all the geography they knew, I was proud of them, excited for them, and so pleased that I could do this for them by making it real." Was the relationship confirmed for Chris in his students' enthusiasm? Did the relational aspect become as real to Chris as Iceland did for the students? Chris confirms this sentiment in his remark, "I felt more real as a teacher by being able to do geography at Thingvellir."

There is a relational tension and pedagogical challenge in teaching lies in making it real for students by allowing the abstract notions to bump up against reality. The bump is hard to ignore when the realness of outside does not displace the abstractness of inside lessons but is accessible as the very thing studied. I sensed that Chris not only walked into the authenticity of a lived experience, but was bumped on the head by this pedagogical embodied of the *here and now* (Merleau-Ponty, 1962).

Grandfather Tree

Learning the legitimacy of lessons does not always require bumping into reality. The compelling lessons engendered by outside experiences also comprise the subtle realizations students grasp when *they see* the lesson outcome because of a concrete metaphor. Jay experienced the realness of the lesson by engaging a simple analogy the students could relate to. This same analogy could have been deployed inside the classroom, but Jay is certain the exercise takes on a more profound meaning outside. This meaning, or realism, could very well be drawn from the living organisms that surround us outdoors. Trees seem to have a unique connection to our human psyche, and old trees, especially, hold a place in our hearts, like grandparents do.

> There is this huge oak tree that reminds me of my childhood tree; it called to us kids. I brought the students out to lie on their backs. Their focus was to look up the tree trunk and through the tree branches and see it as their life. From a personal development standpoint this tree is the Career and Life Management course. Each branch became a story, a part of their lives; the tree's growth represented their growth—obstacles and all. If you are on a branch and something happens in your life that you can change, then you go on another avenue, but all of a sudden this branch is rotten and broken. So you let that monopolize your life or you take another way. Eventually, you work your way to the outreach of the tree.
>
> So when my students looked straight up, they were actually following the branches and saying, "Okay this is where I am and that is where I am going, and this is where I want to be..." It was amazing because the day before I could not get my students to share openly in the classroom, but they did it outside. We all took turns; each of us seemed to be talking to the tree, not the class. For some reason it was easier for them to open up with this huge old tree outdoors. The tree is real and present in their lives right at that very moment, and the tree is non-judgmental. I think they are talking with that old tree like they would to a grandparent. They are giving qualities of their own life to this tree. So as a result, they fall into the vastness above them and forget they are talking with us. (Jay, Career and Life Management teacher)

Jay continues our conversation by asserting that the tree's vast age has a connection to wisdom, and that if we ascribe human characteristics to old trees they tend to represent wise elders of the forest that are ready to guide us in life. The physicality of the tree allows students to see their lives as real processes and experiences. For Jay, the tree's significance lay in how it facilitated connect the students to the CALM course outcomes, one of which is getting them to predict where they will be years from now based on where they have been. This is a fairly abstract notion that can be difficult for youth, let alone adults, to grasp. I found it interesting that Jay related the tree to childhood memories and that as an adult he still hears a calling to the past. Adolescence is a time of uncertainty, but if teachers can make the present—let alone the future—somehow real and meaningful to students, we open the possibility to learning that is more introspective and influential. The connections made by students are based on the present that is more connected to a future event, even if it is an abstract possibility.

Jay commented there was a struggle to get students to open up inside the school about their lives and aspirations. To keep pedagogy central to teaching, Jay moved the lesson outdoors. Can the outdoors mediate our lessons pedagogically when our students are challenged? Pedagogically, Jay used the tree to get the students to focus inwards and articulate outwards. Is not good pedagogy about doing what is most appropriate for our students? In this lived experience, this required that Jay to step back and allow the trusted image of a wise grandparent to become central to the lesson.

Living in the Past

Educators face two challenges with curriculum delivery: making the future something that is palpable and that can be imagined by their students and bringing the past into the contemporary lives of their students. How do we teach the past and allow it to have a real presence in our lives? Jody struggled to connect past human events relevant to the lives of children. Jody's decision to teach outside aimed, in part, to deliberately touch the events of history and to step into the past as a teacher of history. Jody strove for more than museum re-creation; he wanted the students to *feel* the past as something real in the development of civilization. Jody hoped that students, by hiking into an abandoned village from the past and through re-creation, could re-create themselves as descendents of this community's history.

> The Gabareius Trail off of the coast of Cape Breton is a very isolated place. It is actually an old settlement that still has the remains of an old bustling fishing community during the 1800's. When the fishing died off, so did the community. At the trailhead, I gave a bit of the history on the area. My class gets into it as we hiked the old road into the settlement. You always get a few for whom history is just not their thing, but as we hike the road they have been instructed to look for the old stonewalls and foundations. When they find them, I swear the mood starts to change—they start getting into it. Its like they all start falling back into time; they become hushed and our school life becomes more distant than the life that used to be here 100-plus years ago.

> Just being out there on the spot that represented a past way of life with my class, made it a pretty spectacular outing. Actually, being in the place that we are studying *in school* creates a real connection to our present. There was a sense of realness, even though this whole area has been reclaimed—the trees are in a different state of growth and the farming fields are almost gone—but we were still able to get a sense of the of the people who lived there. Almost ghostly. Being at that old farm at the edge of the settlement, and seeing the family burial plot with tilted headstones, all moss-covered or buried in leaves, allows us to touch the past like no other text could. You can still see how this past community existed right on the edge of an absolutely beautiful coastline of granite. These human traces give a definite sense of people having been settled there before; you feel the community life that once was.
>
> That day my students were able to touch their own histories, and became a class of living historians. We were putting life back into something that was no more, but a reminder of time like the old stonewalls that lined our walk. We become ghosts of the present as we roamed that old farm and settlement. (Jody, History teacher)

Jody experienced the past in the living present by resurrecting, with students, a community life as aspiring historians. The stories told outside, at the edge of the present, were told in a context that provided for a rich, real, and connected experience. The remains of the village were a testimony to the lives that once were, and walking down the cart path leading into the heart of the old fishing settlement allowed students to go back in time, but for real. A lesson inside relies on the ability of imagination: the teacher's and the students'. Going outside releases the imagination and ignites the authentic seeking of context (Greene, 1995). For Jody, it was the past that allowed for the pedagogical connection, but many teachers of history confess to struggling with teaching past events in a manner that makes them relevant to students. However, the manifestation of the physicality of the past, being out there with those children, galvanized the opportunity for the teacher and for the students to relate to one another as historians. Jody was able to connect the students to the past and connect them to their current learning. Jody remarked, "They were not just sitting at their desks staring at me, waiting for the next question. That's when I feel ghosts! They were really with me, inquiring like historians about a time gone by. On that field trip, I knew they were making meaning out of something past." Jody understood that trying to capture the past and make it real to children can be an immediate barrier, and the real lesson is the struggle to be able to relate to one another as learners.

Inside Outside

Kelly connects students concretely to learning through physical challenges. For Kelly, the class experience lies not within the realm of successful assignments or tests but in the ability for students to face obstacles—the lessons the natural world can present to us when we are outside. Kelly stated that the concreteness is generated when the full body and mind are united in the task, and, for Kelly's anecdote, the task is the cliff, the challenge is for students to truly face themselves in the context of the environment. This sort of self-honesty is an inward experience that often forces us to accept our limitations and abilities in unique combinations that make us human. According to Kelly, when confronted with self-challenge, that inward experience can be rich and disturbing but liberating, and this payoff is only possible because of what the outdoors naturally provides: literal and metaphorical barriers.

Kelly shares his observations of one such lived experience that occurred during a team-building activity at the cliffs that surround the end of Ogden Brook, before the brook spills into the ocean. Kelly has an imaginary climbing scenario in which students can be trapped by the incoming tide at the base of the cliff; the tide is imaginary, but the cliff and the moments during the climb are, pedagogically, very real.

> Last fall I had a student tell me, "I didn't fail at the cliff. I failed myself."
>
> I allow nature to be the teacher and the natural world to create the barrier— getting the class up the cliff because the tide is coming up in 45 minutes. I simulate a rising tide to give the task a time constraint. The difficulty comes when some class members can make the climb using a secure line and others in the class just cannot; they try, but fail to start or stall halfway up. I am spotting the students as we go up the cliff face and the entire time I realize that I am coaching them to pull out of them what is needed in the situation, but sometimes they are not able to find what is needed to finish the climb. Watching those few students standing at the high-tide line, they feel an emotional low, but I cannot control that feeling of self as a teacher.
>
> There was this one student halfway up— frozen—and he is struggling with trying to trust those that he is with, guiding him up, and

> that he will be supported. At that moment, I knew I was not trying to coach or motivate the student upward, I was helping the student to face his own limitations and that it was okay. The cliff is so real, but what you are feeling inside is more real. It does not get any more concrete than that! As a teacher, you have to trust that this is a good experience and the learning is meaningful. (Kelly, Physical Education teacher)

Kelly explained that the learning that occurs outside is profound, both within the group and on your own. According to Kelly, the experience was not about failure, because it is something that we all face when learning, outside or inside. Kelly remarked: "The outcomes of the cliff could not be altered, modified, or accommodated to meet the learners. The students had to face the climb or not climb and face the tide." The consequences of self-discovery the students confronted, according to Kelly, are more real when experienced outdoors. It is the lessons of self that students discover, which are known immediately and impossible to deny. As the students meet the cliff head on, they realize the realness of the cliff and of their ability, along with the team's commitment to reach the top. The task is real, the cliff is always in front of them or below them, and Kelly witnesses this emotional challenge with every group for 45 minutes as the tide laps at their shoe laces.

Pedagogy requires teachers to assess continuously if the experience is appropriate for their students. I always struggle to balance the challenges in the outdoors with maintaining positive learning experiences for my students. However, Kelly's scenario highlights the reality that it is the natural world that becomes the teacher, and in those moments there is no discrimination: students must cope with the abilities they have and must learn to live with that realization. "Going inward is probably the most difficult challenge many of these kids face," Kelly notes.

I do not wish to leave the reader with the wrong impression. Kelly mentions on numerous occasions that as the teacher in these outdoor experiences he is not passive; he is connected pedagogically to the students' inner struggle. Kelly asserts that it is after the physical activity that the truly significant work begins with children. How does a teacher keep the realness of his students' discoveries balanced with reflection as they find ways to foster their future growth?

Experiential Pedagogy

During times of heightened emotions and fear, I too feel vertigo when I literally have no ground beneath my feet, yet I lead my class to these moments so we can face the possibilities of fear that are natural in the world. While living through moments of personal fear, the need for real support is critical for many people. The relational fear involved in teaching might be the battling of a "real-world monster" known as outside experiences. As teachers, everywhere we look in the world, we see that fear looms as a possibility. Leading others to face fear experientially, without knowing the outcome, is the curricular lesson at the heart of the realm of the unpredictable! The fear consists of knowing that leading students to extreme, practical experiences outside may not provide students what they need or what you want for them. As Kelly stated, the real work, regardless of students' abilities, comes after the physical experience, because what is crucial is how students are able to integrate what they have learned about themselves for use in future experiences.

Much of current education employs outcomes intended to control fears, to control learning through the text, and to mediate the world via the indoor classroom. We try to sweep fears into the corners of our classrooms and pretend they no longer exist, or we allow them to exist in measured amounts. However, when the moment is right, the world inevitably asserts itself and with it brings fears that can dominate students' thoughts. As these fears gain a foothold, they can direct students' lives as they reveal limits and leave students insecure. Heidegger (1962) points out that the moment of fear occurs when "what we have … characterized as threatening is freed and allowed to matter to us," and this becomes "fearsome because it has fear as its state-of-mind. Fearing, as a slumbering possibility of Being-in-the-world" (p. 180). Heidegger explains further:

> Fear discloses … predominately in a private way. It bewilders us and makes us "lose our heads" … One can also fear about Others, and we then speak of "fearing for" them … This fearing for the Other does not take away his fear. Such a possibility has been ruled out already, because the Other, for whom we fear, need not fear at all on his part. It is precisely when the Other is not afraid and charges recklessly at what is threatening him that we fear most for [him]. (p. 181)

As a teacher, I too fear for my students as they enter into the world, but I still allow them to go. All forms of teaching are, at times, a confrontation with some sort of fear, even in degrees. I wonder if teaching outside is magnified due to a fear of separation from a teachers' support network—the school—and from the comfort in personal safety of the indoors?

Fear of the outdoors has come to dominate modern Canadians' lives. Many of us would prefer to watch an event on a movie screen or read about the account indoors.

Outdoors, the experience is different. Fear is a motive for living vicariously through the experiences of others, those who push themselves beyond their comfort zones. The experience of the open water did not bring. Fearing the outdoors is ingrained in us as individuals during childhood. We tell our children stories of scary, dark, mysterious things that lurk in the woods.

This fear extends right into adulthood. Parents scramble to coat children with sunscreen, for the sun can hurt us. Our parks have safety travel signs posted along our journeys. Some parks even have staff that greet us, question us, and assess whether or not we have the ability to venture into some of the chosen areas for our trips. This just builds on our fears. The media, too, fuels this anxiety with seasonal themes in news reports. Weather reports present conditions as advisories, warnings, or as the storm of the century! The zone of safety for many of us becomes the comfort that is found within the glow of TV light and the ability to hear about nature's latest threat. We are inundated with information about West Nile Virus, which strengthens our aversion to the outdoors; every insect is now a potential threat. Fear of the outdoors draws commercial exploitation: one advertisement for the Acura MDX, highlights the dangerous journey of the vehicle entering a dark, twisted forest where roots reach out with gnarly, witchy hands that grab but just miss the vehicle. This mystical forest plays on our worst childhood fears of nature as the MDX continues to dodge smashing boulders, oozy mud, and gaping water holes, only to break through to the safety found in the serenity of the meadow. The commercial' voiceover points out that you need to buy the MDX because "You never know what nature will throw at you" (American Honda Motor Company, 2005). The outdoors is not portrayed as natural, as living with or in nature, but as a threatening force to be feared and to retreat from, and to do battle with only when properly equipped.

When confronted by fear, we can become desperate and consumed by our own speculation. Fear can grow and become contagious because "it leaps from next to next, because it forgets itself and therefore does not take hold of any definite possibility. Every 'possible' possibility offers itself, and this means that the impossible ones do so too" (Heidegger, 1962, p. 392). This is precisely what it means to lose oneself within fear. As humans, we fear what we are powerless to control. I can control many aspects of a classroom to ensure overall safety, but I cannot control individual reactions in the outdoors, not the overall experience of my students. Will they be okay? The risk in taking them outside the school is immense; it is an intense battle against fear given that what is known is that the space outside school is dangerous. When it sneaks out from the corners of our classrooms, or from under the childhood bed, we fear life; we fear doing anything in that moment. This fear brings us to a dark and unimaginable edge of possibilities. Should we learn to fear, however, a pedagogy that would see us never go outside with our students?

Bringing students challenges through which they face their inner selves is as challenging pedagogically as the cliff climb is for many of the students. Leading others to a struggle is difficult, but the difficulty is not something teachers should shy away from. The outdoors is challenging by nature, and much can be learned from one's inner struggle when experiencing a natural challenge. Kelly taught children to learn from and live with their abilities. In the process, he resisted a false pedagogy in which every child succeeds. Kelly brought students to Ogden Brook to ensure that connections with the intended physical education learning outcomes are paired with a curriculum that has tangible relevance and is not merely a compilation of inert ideas. Whitehead (1967) states:

> Education with inert ideas is not only useless: it is, above all things, harmful … [and] in our system of education we are to guard against this mental dryrot… The result of teaching small parts of a large number of subjects is the passive reception of disconnected ideas … let the main ideas which are introduced into a child's education be few and important, and let them be thrown into every combination possible. (pp. 1–2)

In essence, Whitehead is seeking fresh combinations to test, challenge, and extract gained knowledge; the objective is to utilize the information gained in the educational exchange. I believe Kelly achieved and met Whitehead's challenge: the cliff is not an inert idea.

Even Gramsci (1971) insists on an active school, though his vision is limited by housing education within school buildings (p. 30). However, Gramsci positions learning as "a spontaneous and autonomous effort of the pupil, with the teacher only exercising a function of friendly guide … to discover a truth one self" (p. 33). Gramsci encourages educators to connect curriculum to life (p. 37). Gramsci's educational considerations may very well contribute to the realness experienced by the teachers in this study who shared their lived experiences of leading students outside for learning experiences.

Learning is a process that aims to make sense of an experience (Dunlap, 1998). What follows are several working articulations of this process, culled from the field of experiential education: "Experiential education is a process through which a learner constructs knowledge, skill, and value from direct experiences" (A. E. E. Journal Advisory Committee, 1996). Luckmann (1996) expands on this position, stating,

> Experiential education is socially and culturally constructed, but rendered unique by each imagination … a term for how I and others translate personal and collective experience into revelation; it is also a metaphor for 'seeing' phenomena from different angles and vantage points. (p. 6).

Quite simply—and as manifest in the concrete examples provided by Chris, Jay, Jody, and Kelly—experiential education is education (the leading of students through a process of learning) that requires the conscious application of students' experiences by integrating them into the curriculum. Experience involves any combination of the senses, emotions (e.g., pleasure, excitement, anxiety, fear, hurt, empathy, attachment), physical conditions (e.g., temperature, arduousness, strength, and energy level), and cognition (e.g., constructing knowledge, establishing beliefs, and solving problems). Experiential education is holistic in that it addresses students in their entirety as thinking, feeling, physical, emotional, spiritual, and social beings. Students are viewed and integrated as valuable resources for their own education, the education of others, and the well-being of the communities of which they are members (see Carver, 1996, p. 9).

The pedagogical significance of outdoors education is that formal educators, as the senior members of learning communities, share directly and authentically in the process of the students' learning experience; in the outdoors, teachers continue to learn actively from their experiences with the group and from the outside environment. The involvement of instructors in this process helps them see what a quality-embodied education could be like for students and teachers; implementing such a program, however, is far from simple. Experiential learning operated beyond the naive assumption that learning occurs merely because you do something outdoors. I have discovered that *where* this activity occurs is only one factor that contributes to the significance of the outside teaching experience. All teaching, inside and outside, is a complex endeavor.

In the earlier grades, the values and beliefs of Dewey are practiced daily; as youth progress through the education system, though, teachers seem to remove the effective element of *doing something* from the learning process to more traditional forms of book knowledge (Lindsay & Ewert, 1999). What is learning? The answer to this question changes as students make academic progress. Inherent in this growth is a common belief, shared by educators, that curriculum has purpose and the classroom should be a place of meaningful experiences. As individuals advance educationally, however, practice does not necessarily reflect this belief. Ironically, teachers disembody education from genuine experience by removing students from the outside world and contain learning within restricted, inside experiences. This restriction tightens as the learner progresses through the grades.

The notion that "you do and you learn" is often taken for granted. It becomes a challenge, therefore, to "educate the whole child [and] not to just pass on the socially-constructed products of society" (Dewey, 1938, p. 18). For Dewey, the educational experience is explained as *felt*, which is subjective, not objective; the aim of knowledge is to challenge the problematic events in the world to make changes by applying that knowledge (Dewey, 1964). The importance of education, within this philosophy, is not to produce the right answer but to open possibilities for the student to apply knowledge to effect change. This approach links directly to experiential education, because the goal of the experiential educator is facilitate students' application of what they know, to make connections between new experiences, and to find resolutions for their challenges

(Crosby, 1995). For the teachers in this chapter, this process is lived as the authentic moment of learning. It must be noted, however, that making a learning experience meaningful requires reflection that is intimately connected to the direct learning experience.

Joplin's (1995) research asserts that experience alone is insufficient to be called experiential education; the reflection process turns the experience into experiential learning. Dewey (1938) theorized the importance of reflection and put it into instructional practice: "There should be brief intervals of time for quiet reflection provided even for the young. But they are periods of genuine reflection only when they follow after times of more overt action and are used to organize what has been gained in periods of activity in which the hands and other parts of the body beside the brain are used" (p. 63). Joplin's explanation of experiential learning is a continuous cycle, a spiral of experiences moving forward. Dewey (1938) posits "every experience lives on in further experiences. Hence, the central problem in education [and for pedagogy] based upon experience is to select the kind of experiences that live fruitfully and creatively in subsequent experiences" (p. 27). And pedagogically I would position the need for Dewey's assessment to embrace the relationship as an element of an embodied education. The social relationship of education manifests in the environment individuals find themselves in, and their interactions with those who share that environment. Learning emerges when experience allows for a social harmony (Bell, 1995). Making learning real is very important, indoors and out, but pedagogically I wrestle with what is most appropriate in the outside experience. Is the element of reality inherent in discovery the most important element for children as learners? Pedagogically, how real, how intense, and how experiential should I seek to make the outside learning experience?

CHAPTER 9

CURRICULUM OF RELATIONSHIPS

My class made camp on a sandy spit of land covered by red pine, offering us a great view of the surrounding lake, the sky through the tree tops, and the sound of wind through the needles—a truly magical spot that perhaps sparked our talk about dreams. As dusk gave way to darkness, the sky above the pines became awash with what seemed like millions of stars … and some of them were streaking across the sky. The Perseid Shower—what a treat!

As we looked upward, Jennifer, who showed up on day one with her things in a duffle bag lined with a garbage bag, and who had hardly said two words, began to speak of her dreams. She described the night that she was taken from her abusive father's house and placed into foster care for the following four years. She explained to me the things that her experiences had taught her, the positive things that she liked about her current family, the things that she really valued, and she shared with me the fact that she "couldn't believe that she was telling me these things."

Jennifer shared with me that night her dream to some day develop a program for youth in care. It would be a program that would educate and empower young people to make healthy choices, to serve their community,

> and to live with a smile. I'm sure many wishes were made upon those stars that night. The first step to realizing a dream is to share it with someone. (Jay, Career and Life Management teacher)

To Wish Upon a Star

Before Jay shared Jennifer's story with me, he observed a clear distinction between the nature of relationships inside the school and those outside the school. For Jay, relationships that form outside the school happen with ease, with depth, and as a consequence of the experience:

> I become close to all of these kids, in ways that are not possible indoors. The relationships out here form naturally, as a part of living with kids in the outdoors, and this closeness is a class experience. Indoors, it may be a few students, or students to teacher, but out here it's all or nothing, and I ['ve] never experienced *nothing*.

Similarly, I recall the outdoor class experience as a realization that others need me as a teacher, and that I, too, need others. This need is undeniable in the outdoors. I have experienced this need as a positive acceptance of who we are as people—those very virtues that make us students and teachers. Jay's story of Jennifer is indicative of how Jay valued the relationships that form in the outdoors.

Sharing dreams is the ability to create something from hope and to express this meaning in one's life. Jay experienced the uniqueness of a conversation with a student that was more than classroom context would normally sanction or encourage. Jay recognized that this conversation was educational, first, and more profound than previous inside discussions. Being outdoors and away from the school was conducive to the thoughtfulness of this starry night chat. Jay explained that when students open up in a group setting to reveal who they are; it is more likely to happen outside than inside. In comparing moments when students did open up inside the school, Jay differentiated them, saying, "inside it was more discussion; outside it is more conversational." Jay explained the substance of outside conversations as follows: "When I am outdoors with kids, it is through our conversations that I really get to see who they are in the world." For Jay, this is a form of witnessing what is uniqueness about the individual, which reveals the authentic self of each student. In considering the centrality of pedagogy for this study, Jay's story underscores the importance of not taking for granted the relationships that form outside, and for teachers to tune themselves to the sensitivity required to maintain these often fragile student–teacher connections.

Experiential Relationships

This chapter aims to explore the nature of the relationship that form because a class enters the outdoors. The central aspect of such relationships is the experience between students and their teacher, but also critical is that people are in a natural environment. As Jay noted, these relationships are enabled because of the context in which students and teachers find themselves for educative reasons. It is important that the reader recognize how essential this outside context is in shaping the development of the relational aspect in education. Thus, it is critical to see the relationship as central to the process of pedagogy rather than the means or method of learning and theory outdoors.

Successful relationships are determined by the ability of teachers to "enter into the world of a child" with thoughtfulness and tact (van Manen, 2002c, p. 3). When teachers encounter and engage children in learning, "thoughtfulness is a special kind of knowledge" (van Manen, 2002c, p. 5). Van Manen (2002a) explains the pedagogical relationship as follows: "pedagogy is both a complex and subtle affair. Pedagogy is the ability to actively distinguish what is appropriate from what is less appropriate for children or young people" (p. 8). The challenge for any educator, inside the school or outside the classroom, is to cultivate one's pedagogical thoughtfulness. As van Manen (2002c) points out, "Tactful educators have developed a caring attentiveness to the unique: the uniqueness of children, the uniqueness of every situation, and the uniqueness of individual lives" (p. 8).

Paramount in the pedagogical relationship is the consistency and reliability of the several abilities that teachers may or may not have: to see a certain way, to hear a certain way, and to respond in a certain way for each child (van Manen, 2002c, p. 10). It is the uniqueness of this seeing, outside the school, that Chris, Leslie, Kelly, and Jamie highlight in their accounts of lived experiences in which the relational elements of pedagogy were situated.

Life With Others is Finding Neutral Ground

The outdoors has contributed to a significant educational experience in education. The act of taking children outside exceeds notions of risk or fear because of the personal and mutual responsibility associated with being in the outdoors—that only partially contributes to the significance. Leslie related a lived experience that showed she understood the outside relationship as a constant reminder to see students as people, not as problems, and that this vigilance included all students. For Leslie, being outside is to see care, worry, compassion, hope, anticipation, struggle, and (at times) fear and anguish; most importantly, however, Leslie saw the learner full of life and future possibilities. As Leslie revealed, the outside fosters a pedagogical connection that is mutually engaging for students and teacher. Leslie took an emphatic position that school is not what life is about, and the inside experience does not represent what life has to offer; school is about preparing children on their terms for a possible future. Leslie recalls a few of her students, a group of boys that always sat in the back, who were difficult to teach and unpleasant inside the classroom. "They were very difficult to get work out of. It was difficult to get them to come to class; but if there was an outside trip, like hiking or orienteering, they would be there. Outside is not the traditional learning spot, and they are not just sitting and talking in the back of the classroom. That is what they liked and it was a way to get to them engaged." Leslie continued:

> Teaching relative humidity is not the most exciting unit, and those boys in the back were letting me know this in not-so-subtle ways. Getting them to process the parts of the formula calculations was an absolute test of patience, but as soon as we went outdoors with the sling psychrometers, they revealed a whole new attitude. I wanted to split them up for the outside group work, but I didn't.

> We were about 20 minutes into the lab when a few of them were heading over to me. They were giggling and screwing around in class and then came the famous words, "Hey I think we got a problem." Past experiences have taught me that meant they broke the equipment. The leader of the crew went on to ask, "Why are we getting different results?" I realized that they were really doing the lab, and that this was the point—to have differing results from different groups. All I could do was smile, and that opened up the teaching moment I had hoped for. A lesson outdoors allows them to try, and we all can see that they have something to give. We get to know each other better and are able to reach a different student–teacher level, and the outside becomes our neutral ground. (Leslie, Geography teacher)

In the classroom, Leslie comments that it is a constant struggle to keep the marginal learners on track, whereas outside, because it is not that traditional formal setting, they can be more themselves. And according to Leslie this, of course, results in some cursing and swearing, a little frustration, but students will figure out what needs to be done by taking a more genuine interest in the lesson. I am sure all teachers have or will encounter a difficult student at some point in their career, for any number of reasons. I, too, have experienced challenging students, and I can attest to being able to better reach those students as a teacher by going outdoors. Leslie concurred: "The outdoors helps me reach learners that are not drawn in by what happens inside." I think students are more interested in what I have to say when we're outside, and, like Leslie, I feel that maybe I am more interested in what *they* have to say because of the place we are in. In the outdoors, Leslie notes being able to reach a place of reciprocation and natural respect for one another that is important in a learning relationship. She remarked, "I feel I am getting through and they are feeling heard." One of the central challenges for educators is to find ways to invite students to participate in the learning process.

Pursuing this aspect of process, Leslie indicated an important pedagogical consideration: "Being outside with the kids allows me to be a little less formal, and I like that. I like the fact that I can be more relaxed because I am outside the confines of my classroom. In the outdoor classroom, the teacher and students can be real to one another. Going outdoors with children engenders a pragmatic pedagogical condition: a relationship that is unique. In Leslie's lived experience, the teacher–student relationship is unique, the way students present themselves outside is unique, and the outdoor context allows the learning experience to be unique. What specifically, then, is unique, and what makes this uniqueness important to a pedagogical relationship? It could be that the outside experience is crucial as a non-traditional location for the relationship. This aspect of place not only forges the relationship, it has the ability to challenge the self and others in the relational elements of teaching and learning.

Leslie pointed out that even the academic kids benefit from an outdoor lab in geography: "Traditional education is for academic kids. They will do what they are supposed to do; but the problem is [that] sometimes the higher-academic kids are bored with the run-of-the-mill things that happen in a classroom. You need something else." Going outside for data collection is special, even if the same data could be collected indoors, and, according to Leslie, the academic kids love it:

> Life gets boring and mundane for them, too, but I know that they will still do it in the classroom; they just won't enjoy it as much. The less academic kids will now feel that they can do something and be just as good at it as the more academic kids.

In the outdoors, students see things differently. Further, students and teachers may see each other in a different light that is not clouded by institutional expectations that have conditioned students since primary grade. This recognition may very well be Casey's (1993) notion of implacement: finding self *in place* in the world, engaged in an event, recognition of existence, time as part of place consciousness that is not separate from being-in-the-world, and the sense belonging somewhere where place has a presence in our lives. Implacement may not be a possible lived experience for students or teachers when many students struggle with the traditional notion of the classroom as a *space* that occupies them for moments of time where they either experience rituals of failure (see Contenta, 1993), disassociation from the world (see Hern, 2003), or both.

From Group to Community

Kelly articulated this element of struggle in classroom space as something that is basic to being human and what it means to be a person in the world and belonging to a group—becoming a community—in a school. A condition many teachers strive for is the creation of a sense of community within their classrooms. When does a teacher know this has been achieved? Is a classroom community recognizable through a particular classroom atmosphere? According to Kelly, community outdoors is magnified as an experience, and the process that transforms students from a group to a community is a different process as a result of the environment. Consequently, the nature of the community that evolves is special and unique when compared to that of an indoor classroom:

Figure 18: Personal canoe trip in the rain. PFDs are worn under the raingear. Photograph by A. Foran.

> Once I am out there, I immerse myself in the natural essence that traveling outdoors brings on. There was this one trip where it pissed down rain for 24 hours (see Figure 18), and at the end of the day, exhausted, wet, cold, and hungry, we finally pulled into camp. All the students wanted to retreat from the environment, to crawl into their tents, just go to bed, and forget all about supper—way too much work at this point in the journey. At that moment I witnessed what the outdoors can do—the outdoors pulled out of us what we do not normally pull out of ourselves indoors. The students still had to function: they had to put up a cook shelter, set up tents, stow the canoes and gear, and finally get into dry clothes. After much effort and complaining, they were able to get enough dry wood to get a fire going. We were able to cook supper under the kitchen tarp and stay dry. At this point in the trip, the outdoors has pulled the kids down to their most basic needs, and these needs have to be met.

> That is what the wilderness does: it creates immediate relationships forged in struggle.
>
> A class starts out as a group, but nature brings it out—a community. I cannot force them to become a community. That is something that just happens between us. That supper was one of unconditional caring and giving. Students were doing for one another, sharing a dry pair of socks, offering a warm fleece, giving up a comfortable camp chair to another worn body, and helping out in little ways like doing one another's dishes and pots; even when it was not their turn. It's like we instinctively know that community is the only real thing we have out here, and that belonging to this community is the only thing that really matters. When nature throws challenges our way, like that day of canoe travel in the rain, some people need to be supported and nurtured, and some need confidence to trust themselves and the others. Ultimately, we become real community. As hard as I have tried in the past, I have never really been able to create this sense of community inside my gym. (Kelly, Physical Education teacher)

It is in the real and in the becoming-real in the outdoors that we see ourselves and begin to see others. This relational ability is significant to the pedagogical relationship, and critical for any group that achieves genuine community. When something is real it is undeniable, and for Kelly it is a relational understanding: "The outdoors has allowed us to see what it means to be human—[being] community minded beings in that educational relationship." Kelly explains outside teaching as away to get people connecting with inside of themselves differently than they do in a classroom; they find something in themselves that some may have never seen otherwise. And out there they share what Kelly believes to be humanity! What the world presents to us outside is real, it is absolute; the reality is found in how students face the challenges, which are also real, and it is the premise Kelly uses to lead children. Kelly has to be fully present to nurture and challenge and yet maintain a pedagogical balance that is sensitive and appropriate to the children. As Kelly shared, the outdoors reduces things to their most basic level, and it may be in that simple state of being in the world where teachers can see with ease, pedagogically, the growth of a community of learners. Is pedagogy allowed to emerge when indoor's barriers of are removed? Is pedagogy, the most basic element in the student–teacher relationship, made evident when all else is removed?

Thou Shall Not Judge Another

Jamie's lived experience reveals pedagogical threads that are similar to those of Kelly. However, his anecdote offers another facet of the outside teaching experience that captures pedagogy for the outdoors differently. Jamie told of an experience in which the teacher shared in the emotional struggle and did not simply lead the physical challenge. The teacher rode the excitement, the frustration, and the failures and accomplishment as a member invested in the class. This anecdote reveals a shared understanding of genuine community at a distinct human level during a low ropes challenge activity called the Nitro Crossing:

> When they finally see the initiative, they are quiet for they know it's going to be a difficult challenge. The first attempt confirms that it is not easy

because there is this big 350-pound kid. Yet, after repeated attempts, something changes within the group. They start to deal with the capacity of who they are collectively and what they can do individually. In the failed attempts they realize they each need help and know that if they accomplish the task it will be a team effort.

This was very evident with this very large student. His every attempt at the crossing fails. He is swinging, but he is not making it. The class sees and they share his despair, and I share it too! He tells the class he just can't do it! They huddled and the entire class created a plan with his input and finally, he gets himself up, but only with the help of the group. With a knot between his legs, and he slides across the zone with his legs straight rather than bent. He stays an inch or two above the ground all the way across and lands on the other side. They grab his legs and pull him up onto the safe-zone platform. He made it!

That was a bonding moment; they were all a part of this experience in belonging. We all know that it was his weight that held him back, and he did not posses the strength to hold himself up, but with help. The help here is not physical; rather, it is in not judging him, and really supporting him. That unconditional support allows him to feel like a member of that group. He has that whole sense of belonging, and I feel it extended directly to me. So when he glides across, we are all on that rope with him. (Jamie, At-Risk Support teacher)

According to Jamie, the Nitro Crossing was more than a head exercise; the whole class is fully engaged, mind, emotion, and body. Jamie noted, "By going outside I can get them connected to their whole being. Then they connect to real emotions, not faked, simulated, or a mere discussion of emotions. It's not pretending." Achievement here is more than a student self-actualizing in success. This is a collective moment that entails complete pedagogical commitment. In reflection, I know that is why I go outdoors with children, for I experience the pleasure of facilitating this meaningful experience. Jamie sought to summarize this lived experience this way:

> The simplicity of it is that community is possible inside as well, but it is the process that brings groups together in the outdoors that remains a unique element in experiential teaching. As a teacher, you are connected to those emotions. And on the other end, as the witness and leader, you are still challenged like they are. The outdoors presents a complete activity, a full experience.

The words *full* or *fully* bring to the fore the notion of a scale of experientiality. Gibbons and Hopkins (1980) have reported that there are some experiences that may be more experiential that others. Their research shows degrees of experientialness. Gibbons and Hopkins contend there was such a wide range of very disparate programs referred to as experiential that the term *experiential* lacked meaning. To clarify what was meant by *experience-based education*, Gibbons and Hopkins created a scale of experientiality. This was a ladder-like, or continuum, model that illustrated how activities could be seen as varied in their degree of experientiality. However, I believe the scale of experientiality proposed by Gibbons and Hopkins is problematic, because life is 100% experiential.

Nonetheless, they posit a scale of experientialism that reflects what people engage in every moment and whenever a person may deem that moment to be experiential.

Gibbons and Hopkins' (1986) attempt to grade human activity seems doomed because it is ultimately requires an artificial and hierarchical mode of thinking to promote and rank active experiences as inherently more valuable than others and dismisses the more passive experiences. As Dewey (1938) points out, experiences are not inherently good or bad; their value or significance depends very much on individual circumstances. However, in an effort to understand Jamie's notion of fullness, I turn to Gibbons and Hopkins (1980) to point to the different kinds of engagements a person may have with educational experiences. Gibbons and Hopkins demonstrate preference for activities in which students are thoroughly engaged in the planning and process. In short, they suggest a progression in the modes of experiential learning: receptive mode (one observes), analytic mode (one studies, explores, and experiments), productive mode (one sets goals, creates, builds, organizes, and theorizes), development mode (one performs with quality, sees important activities, strives to master skills), and finally, psychosocial mode (where one pursues excellence, seeks mastery, and becomes an exemplary community member). Each of the five modes has the features of the previous mode, in addition to a major increase in involvement in achieving the *fullness* of experience. For Jamie's class, the fullness was fundamental to accepting people for who they are and to supporting them within an exemplary community model.

Relationships With Nature

Contributing to fullness is an element that is not measured as part of the experiential, and that is how we are in the natural world, how we relate to nature when we are in the world. Does the natural world call to us? Does nature call on our pedagogical abilities? The outdoors, as a place, calls to us and beckons many to come outdoors; the pedagogical relationship, I suggest, is interwoven with the outdoors, and is seemingly inseparable. The attraction of place is a common theme among people who have direct experiences with the outdoors. I frequently hear people refer to their sense of belonging to a particular place. Many describe this as a profound rootedness. Some make claim to place as an almost fanatical attachment, a mystical and powerful sense of belonging. Feelings for a place have a personal value: privacy, control, security, and comfort from the external pressures of a more social world. Places can become geographic centers in one's personal and professional lives that are "carved out of chaotic space… [and] set apart from the rest of the world as a holy precinct" (Bollnow, 1961, p. 34). The importance a place can have in a person's being can borders on spiritual sanctity, evoking ardent feelings that remind one of what is most precious. As a teacher, my sense of belonging to a place has had little to do with the school building; I feel more connected with students as a class in outside places.

This connection to outside places was common among the teachers in my study. However, the connections articulated by Leslie, Chris, Bobby, Jody, and Jay contain unique elements of their lived experiences that emphasize the necessity of pedagogy as it is lived in an outdoors place. Experiencing an outside place with a group of children is a shared experience, and each teacher had difficulty separating the child from the place:

both contributed to a special learning experience. How can the conditions of pedagogy change as a result of location, given that the experience of teaching is still involved? According to the teachers, pedagogical distinctiveness draws from the power of the place where teaching evolves, and learning activities are associated with the lesson. Simply stated, place can enhance the simplest aspects of the world, particularly when that place is nature.

A Little Piece of the Universe

Leslie indicated that place is central to the teaching of geography. An outside location contributes tremendously to students' experience of a lesson. Leslie commented that for teaching geography, outside places far surpass simulation: "The place is the lesson." Many students struggle to have more than a sense of belonging; many students desire a definite place in the world. Many educators want to provide this belonging through the courses they teach; having a place to call one's own gives individuals more than security and comfort in the vastness of the world. By understanding oneself in a place, this dual knowledge allows many students to confidently shape their identities. Leslie provides an account of an outdoor lesson where latitude and longitude, and the school field contributed to knowing a place.

> That day was so cold, but they continued to work in the wind, checking, double-checking, and then triple-checking their measurements from their homemade sextants—built from household junk—of the sun on the horizon. They wanted so badly to find their global position. The wind, though, wreaked havoc: blowing their papers, and most importantly,

> blowing their bob that measures their angle. They stayed focused because they did not want to miss the day's zenith. It was all so dynamic, a constant energy in huddling, measuring, and calculating: mind and body so engaged through the hands, connecting the student to learning. With the last set of calculations, I begin hearing cheers, whoops, and applause while groups call out: "We know where we are! We got it!" As I go to each group, I flippantly say, "You're on the back field."
>
> "That's not what we mean; we know where we are in the world." And they show me where the calculations have placed them latitudinal and longitudinally in the world. Even though some groups were kilometers away—some were even in the Atlantic Ocean—it did not matter. That field becomes the whole wide world for those kids, and that day became a day when they really knew where they were. That field gives them all a place in the world. It's like they have now carved out their own place in the universe. (Leslie, Geography teacher)

I wonder if in that identification and fixing of place, Leslie experienced in reflection what Dovey (1985) identifies as "the interaction between people and a physical setting together with a set of meanings" (p. 94). The outdoors is a known key in contributing to powerful formations of belonging in groups, but in this anecdote, the belonging was associated with the students' place in the world. The outside teaching experience underscored a convergence of the fundamental connections of three things: place, memory, and human identity. Tuan (1977) makes this observation:

"Undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value" (p. 6).

What was the pedagogical significance for Leslie on the backfield? Leslie commented that going out onto the field with those kids meant literally carving out a teaching practice. Leslie was able to root her students deeply in an experiential practice in an outdoor place, despite the fact that the conventional classroom is an inside space. Leslie's fond reflections of kids cheering about finding their place were affirming. Similarly, Relph (1985) observes that in reclaiming place, modern people's memories are "constructed … affectionately through repeated encounters … Place experiences are necessarily time-deepened and memory qualified" (p. 26). Leslie's pedagogy is linked to experiences that immersed and situated children in a natural environment—in open, featureless space, the backfield outside of the school. This pedagogical rootedness was achieved in an inconceivably vast space because students generated a common experience through discovering *their* place and knowing where they were in the world.

Teaching outside is a grand opportunity to explore curriculum, discover wonder, and experience freedom. Teaching in a natural space enables learning away from the shrill bell, crowded halls, booming announcements, stacks of marking, and the confines of an institution. Outside learning is free to get caught up in the power of doing—away from the desk, the text, and the chalkboard. For students and the teacher in a natural setting, their excitement was the excitement of the unexplored and an uncharted way to experience school. Stepping outside was the experience of peak discoveries in an ever-expanding world.

Fireside

Is nature a feeling that is deeply linked to people's recognition of the world, a pure world, undisturbed by human interference? I experience this sense of recognition in the fall colors that make the woods traveler feel in the world during the last treasured days of the season, and the powerful smell of fall during seasonal change. Another feeling synonymous with the outdoors is the smell of wood smoke on a winter's evening. I'm compelled to consider the importance of the campfire in outdoor activities.

The campfire has always been a gathering place, and it provides a time at the end of a day's outside excursion for the students to share their stories (see Figure 19). The fire is a place where worn bodies can warm and heal themselves. As an outdoor educator, I find the nightly fire always becomes the best part of the trip. It is around the soothing glow that students and I can relax as a class. It supplies a well-deserved break from the concentrated use of our bodies pushing physical, and at times mental, limits to travel deep into the wilderness and, for many, to explore the unknown. We often mark time with the number of sticks that burn, our timekeepers in the night.

Figure 19: A typical campfire in an established fire pit for a class out trip. Photograph taken by A. Foran

Jay observed that within the fire's warm glow, stories became entertainment, and the class's laughter opened up honesty that became connection:

> The heat of those fires did not lie in the coals; the real warmth resided in emotions from chilled bodies shivering against the bite of the night's cold. This connection to nature in our resting place, around the inviting spill of firelight, reminded us of our place in the world.

I asked Jay how a teacher could experience a relational bond staring into dancing flames. Jay situated the class experience in nature as that of being in the wild places where students, amidst personal growth, discover their *right of passage* in the world. At the center of this lived experience is a student, Mike, who would never engage in any conversation at any level at school. The fire creates moments of intense listening.

> The fire did what I never could, Mike spoke with no prompting. There was a momentary lull in the conversation, then he said, "This is so cool, to be this far out following one of the routes of the Mi' Ma. Think about it: the waterways of an ancient people, our First Nations people." I think my heart stopped beating and the silence around the fire was not the uncomfortable kind; rather, it was the type reserved for respectful waiting and listening, like in church or hospitals. At that point, we all knew that this was to be for Mike. So we let him lead the fire talk.
>
> Many of the kids supported Mike in discussions on their strengths and weaknesses. Many are surprised that they are able to travel so far into the wilderness with limited supplies, and as a result many are nervous. It was then that Mike said, "I have never been this far from home." He was finally showing that more vulnerable side of who he is, and we allowed

> him the space to explore his thoughts and feelings. I could tell he was nervous speaking; he had that little quiver in his words.
>
> I remember sitting back into my camp chair, for I knew this was going to be a long talk. At a fire, time is kept in the burning of the twig pile. Campfire talk is as fluid as a babbling brook; you just have to go with it. By the end of the night, Mike's fire talk turned to spirituality. It is amazing how much these kids love talking and sorting out issues of religion, morality, and mortality. They are so sincere in their wanting to know. Mike said, "How do you really think all this came to be? What I mean is, the waterfall on Teflagar Lake. Do you think something/someone created all this?"
>
> This opens up the floodgate of responses that are the personal connections to a greater spirit. Mike brought the fire to an end with: "I don't know why I told you guys that…" Were did he find the courage to share these truths? At the end of the night, I remember looking out onto the lake into the darkness that surrounds our glow and I had never felt so vulnerable and I had shared nothing. I just listened. Campfires are for listening. (Jay, Career and Life Management teacher)

When a group is sitting around the bright spill of flickering light, there will always be those who gaze, losing themselves in the flames, and the fire-feeders—the ones who constantly attend to the fire like a mother with an infant, attentively providing what is needed so that it burns bright, clean, and hot. Every fire has its singers and storytellers, replete with ever-attentive listeners. Jay is passionate about the trust that develops—is forged—in the heat of a wilderness fire. Jay reflected, "They share so much about themselves, but yet I am the one who feels so vulnerable." Is a teacher's vulnerability a necessary part of the pedagogical encounter? I wonder if teachers who feel and understand the degrees of their own openness to the world can enter into a deeper relationship with their students.

Jay observed, "I love looking at the faces that are across from me during a campfire. I can see the child in each one of them, as smoke, sparks, and the flame flash illuminate their uniqueness." Jay commented that the uniqueness of the campfire lies in the unpredictability of conversation that people and fires always guarantee. That is the beauty of a fire; just as the flame takes form in front of your eyes, it changes, dims, or becomes a flare of brilliance, a constant struggle in forming; the dance has no structure. Fires and their conversations have so much in common. According to Jay, campfires elicit spiritual speculation, fears, and the histories we posses as people, and they connect us at some level to the natural world. We make thoughts public and, in Jay's account, we become witness to stories we would never tell one another at home. Could it be that within the sanctuary of nature and wilderness that this is where we face ourselves?

Many students portray wilderness as desolate, wild, and uninhabited lands; for others, it is a manifestation of God's creation. Jay has learned that wilderness serve an important function in many excursions; it is a place where one can prepare for contact with spiritualism and nature, elements of the spiritual unknown and the spiritual self. At one time, early in the development of human society, all the earth was wild. The natural forces of fire, wind, and rain operated freely, carving and shaping the face of the planet. Earth was a global wilderness. It was a place in which humans were absent. Currently, we still perceive wilderness as a threat or a personal challenge, and something that needs to be captured and portrayed safely in pictures.

It is in the light of a campfire that we are most vulnerable and secure. The fire draws us inward. The gazers stare into the heat, questioning their day in the world, trying to come to terms with their purpose in life, struggling with life's meanings. As they stir the coals, I almost anticipate their posing questions. In the sparks that fly upward into the night sky, our individual truths emerge as spoken declarations of who we are, our beings. This pedagogical sharing is a unique opportunity. Jay viewed the fire as a purity ritual; Gadamer (1998) understood it as a place to make "new meaning, precisely that meaning that has become familiar to us … to the extent that it transcends what is accessible through the senses … but also for the soul" (p.41). Fire is a place of balance, the separation of light and darkness; it provides a light—not the light of day, but a temporary filament of the day, "for on the other side stands night, the darkness, the dense and heavy gloom" (Gadamer, p. 102). According to Parmenides (as cited in Gadamer), this "light is the light of knowledge … the fire is not a destructive fire but a mild one, thus not a blazing flame but only one that sheds light" (p. 108). The knowledge we explore is our truth, which we face in the balance between night and day. The pedagogy is not only in the daily lesson in the wild; it comes from burning wood and shedding light into an area that remained dark in students' lives. Jay asserted that fire allows the telling of truths about ourselves, and it is an experience of honesty, trust, and integrity when we share it publicly with others. In bringing students close to nature, is it possible, pedagogically, to lead them to an inner experience that links students to their identities, which can be a very spiritual encounter.

I See You …

A fire will always continue to draw us into its warmth, but nature has other ways of drawing us in as human beings. Many simple lessons in nature cannot be planned for, but as Chris recounts, many provide profound reminders of our place in a more-than-human world. Chris relived an experience leading a class of geology students out to Taylor's Head for a session on rock hounding (fossil hunting). As Chris told about this experience, I sensed the humility and meekness that underlies this lesson of nature and its reminder of our place in the world. At Chris's school there is a reciprocal agreement: the grade 10 science students participate in the community beach sweep in September, and the following month a few local fishing boat captains run the geology students out to Taylor's Head for the day to gather fossils.

> We have been doing this trip for about four years. It's always great. The students love the day because it's all a bit of an adventure. I was taking the half hour I needed to organize the assignments lists. Then I heard the crowd at the fire works. You know the sound: OOOoohs and AAAaahs with each splash of light in the night sky. I looked up to see the students all gathered on the starboard side, and it was then I noticed the captain had slowed, for I could feel the swells lifting and bobbing the boat.
>
> When I stood on shaky legs, I got a view of the water. I realized the excitement: we were floating in the middle of a pod of pilot whales; they were cresting and blowing just meters from the boat. It was incredible. A few of the whales were just floating and kind of listing to the side, the

> captain called down to us and said they were logging, which means resting. You could see their eyes looking at us. What a beautiful creature.
>
> What happened next changed us that day. There was a baby, a calf that was born, according to the captain, during June. This little whale kind of stood up and was looking directly at us. The captain said the calf was spy hopping; they do that when they are curious about something and want a better look. The baby went under only to pop up again closer, and it was looking right at us again. We were all silent and frozen just staring back in stunned amazement. For the first time I realized that we were not alone. I have spent far too much time studying dead things—rocks, fossils, and land formations. That day *we* were being studied, and I am curious about what conclusions that little creature realized after seeing us. It was then I really looked and saw my class—a group of innocent learners, not just students. (Chris, Geology teacher)

I have had many sensations of not being alone while in the woods with students. It was not the people I sensed, but it was something else. I felt as if we were being watched. It was not a bad feeling, but it did make one feel slightly uncomfortable. Chris did not feel uncomfortable, for the class had an incredible experience in being watched in nature. The class was under observation.

Chris commented that the highlight for the day was not the fossils, though they did have a great day of gathering; rather, the highlights were the whales logging, blowing, and the baby spy hopping. Chris explained that the class highlight went beyond the novelty and surprise of seeing such a thing. Geology, by its nature, puts the learner in direct contact with the earth, but rocks are not living things in the world. Fossils are mere reminders of life gone by and testimony about how old the world is. The lesson lived on the boat that afternoon was that the class was connected to this world and not just through the study of rock formations. Chris commented that it is always humans doing the observing and the studying, but this time around we were in the spotlight. Chris tried to summarize that moment this way:

> Everyone in this class, including myself, was put in their place when that calf stood up to look at us. This innocent little being was right in front of me. I have lived on the coast all my life, as have most of these kids, but I have never been so close to nature or to my class as I was at that moment.

Fossils are a reminder of lives gone by; students should serve teachers as a reminder of the innocence in learning that is somehow forgotten in the day-to-day pressures of North American education. A playful game of spy hopping caused Chris to experience the seeing in pedagogy, and for Chris this coastal lesson was life altering as a teacher.

An Ancient World

Going outside can be to experience nature as a lifestyle that has been surpassed by modern ways of living. For some cultures, living closely with nature was and still is a way of life. Capturing that existence is difficult, if not impossible, from inside a classroom. Jody commented on the need to interact with nature to bring lessons to life by taking students to special places. Without nature, the experience is not possible; nature and living are one and the same for Jody and the Mi'Maq 10 Studies class. In these places, connections form between the students and the natural world, and for Jody the pedagogy in this lived experience is undeniably linked to something much older than the educational system. Pedagogy is a constant in adult–child relations, just as nature is constant in our being in the world.

> There are a number of great places around that I developed some relationship with and one of them is the Alison Lake, north of Caledonia. These are very sacred lands; one can feel it here. On the last night, we perform the First Nations Medicine Wheel ritual. As we finished the sweet grass ceremony, I prepared the students for their solo, were hopefully during their solace they to find their totem—the animal in nature that represents them. The solo lasts for about two hours, and after the exercise we share our visioning. Some see their totem in some mental form; some physically see their totem.
>
> What grabs me most is how sincerely the students take this experience. They were enthralled totally. The level of attention is considerable for a group of kids that are your typical jocular bunch, but during this activity they were totally into it. They did not waiver. They did not joke around with each other. They were focused on the activity. I think as a teacher that I connected to them on mental, intellectual, physical, and spiritual levels. But the potency of the activity is connected to the place. The Medicine Wheel activity is ancient and connected to natural things in the world. It is rooted way back to an ancient way of life. With the solo sit I think there is something spiritual that happens. These ancient rituals are based on something. Nature draws us into something old, whether it is

> through a traditional ceremony or just sitting on the shore. (Jody, History and Mi' Maq Studies teacher)

As I listened to Jody's account of teaching in a natural place, I could not stop thinking of a world that is much older than human experience. Jody's story of the Medicine Wheel ceremony helped me consider our primordial connections to the world. This lived experience is one of reconnecting to our primordial nature as humans. Could it be that by going to these special places our pedagogical sensibilities become attuned to what those senses were before the formalization of education? Jody was able to share an experience that was spiritually significant and curricular in focus and that was meaningful to the children who explored their totems. Jody's comment that "they were into it" made me question whether the students would have taken this experience as earnestly if it were not for the place. I wonder, when seeking what is appropriate for our students in a pedagogical sense, if teachers must first be alert to place suitability: is this place the best location for students to learn in? At one time we were more directly related to nature, and our learning, consequently, was probably linked more directly to the natural world. Over time, the place for learning became a modern, centralized location called *school*. But nature still seems to call to us from outside, and there are a few who listen. Nature has a way of drawing us into the ancient. Jody allows students to experience the spirit of a place through lessons in nature. It is the spirit of the place that was central to Jody's anecdote. The spirit of the world is ancient and is experienced more easily when we bring ourselves out to greet nature.

A Relational Pedagogy

Being who you are is the most important individual element in forming a trusting group in the outdoors, and the connection includes the teacher. The ethical bond shared within the group develops as one trusts and allow others to see who one really is within a community. According to Levinas (1982, 1961), this witnessing is a face-to-face requirement that strengthens the ethical encounter. For Levinas (1961), this is the ultimate human situation—an irreducible relation (p. 81). The ethical demand calls on us to be human, and this can manifest at times care or compassion. Jamie stated that when outside, the students forget to be cool: "They forget to pretend that they are gangsters or from the hood, and they are having fun with each other. It is not structured. It is not regimented. It is just kids together learning and discovering who they are in your lesson."
Jamie posits that when teaching occurs outside, there is less of you, the teacher, but that you are more connected—you become a member of the community. Jamie explains this dynamic this way: "You can sit back and watch. They take care of each other, they are protective. I see relationships form right in front of me. Relationships for me are shared experiences."

The outdoors may be a natural place for people to create opportunities that open their existence to relationships with others and with their natural world. The constraints of indoors may hinder individuals sharing to share meaningful connections fully; teaching inside may in fact represent a struggle to overcome the limits of an artificial world. The inside world of education might promote the dominance of subject material over human relations. By exploring *in loco parentis* for pedagogical meaning, understanding, and significance, van Manen (1991) shares the following discovery, which is comparable to findings in this study:

> In my ongoing conversations with teachers and young people, I have been intrigued by the fact that when teachers and children talk of meaningful educational experiences, these experiences often seem to occur on the margin or on the outside of the daily curriculum experiences of the classroom. One should not make the mistake, however, of supposing that the pedagogical life on the margin of the "teaching/learning process" is not fundamentally connected to the central process of curriculum and teaching. (p. 4)

Van Manen confirms that the relational element in teaching is unique, even special, when teachers lead children into the outdoors. However, I have felt that the difficulty for me as an outdoor educator—and this is articulated by many of the teachers I have spoken with—is the perception that I am on the margins of education. This is problematic for outdoor educators in general, not just for me as an individual teacher, in our attempts to establish outdoor places that are pedagogical. More attention needs to be focused on these special outdoor places, these natural places for teaching, for they enable unique pedagogical possibilities that do not exist indoors. This uniqueness allows educators to deeply connect with children on pedagogical levels and beyond the academics of an inside scholastic experience. By leading our children outdoors, we bring our students closer to the natural world and allow them to feel the power of a world that is not human but is something much more. The more we go outdoors with our students, the greater the opportunities for our students to discover that the natural world is not an isolated space and not merely a mystery, but that it is a place for pedagogy.

This understanding, however, cannot be developed when we remain indoors. One must go out to feel and experience what the outside can offer relationally. It is important for teachers to see that the outdoors is significant to the relationship. Nature can change us and shape us, and the natural world continues to call to us. Jody realized in outdoor lessons that when we go outdoors, that in that expanse of nature, we are all part of a larger entity that connect us; by doing something together outdoors, we are connected to some sort of spirit. Can pedagogy connect us with the land and spirits? Has education lost sight of what connects us to nature as people?

Ironically, it is not necessarily teachers that provide the lessons that best highlight a place for pedagogical purposes. The living, natural world is a teacher and has much to teach us if we are open to learning. Chris respects the lessons of nature. Yet Chris reminds us that we must acknowledge and accommodate the child in this learning in outside places; an outside pedagogy is far more complex than merely leading children out-of-doors. Jay's lived experience in the wilder outside places is a beacon to that which calls us as people. Going there is only a part of the experience, for around the fire we have the human need to tell about and discuss our experiences. Leslie's account is also a reminder: many of us may not know we even have a place within the world. Going outside with children affirms for them, and for teachers, that we all belong to this world, and even a simple field is better than being inside when introducing and reconnecting students to the world.

CHAPTER 10

CURRICULUM OF ADVENTURE

Just before I set up my last remaining students for a Setan Walk; a nature solo that requires students to connect with nature then, they write about it, this one kid comes charging out of the woods into the opening. He was hollering, "The woods are on fire!" and he was panicking. I went up to the wooded area with the student to where he saw the fire. I remember feeling that sensation of dread, but thinking as I was following him, that I could smell no smoke. As we approached the opening at the top of the little hill, we just stood in awe, just completely in awe. The tree at the very top was on fire all right, but it was not flames of destruction. I could not believe my eyes. There were thousands upon thousands of monarchs that had landed there. They were fluttering and it looked like fire because of the dominant orange markings on their wings, mixed with the odd yellow ones. We just stood there for the longest time looking at these creatures. What an adventure right in the back of our own school; it was unbelievable. I had never seen anything like this in my life. By this time my entire class had gathered around me, and I could not have asked for a quieter class. After we stood there for a while, we talked about it. Many of us came back at the end of the day, but they were gone. Unbelievable! I

> have thought a great deal about that experience and I wonder if that is what Moses saw, all those years ago. I don't know. I could never have planned that lesson; only nature can give us a learning opportunity like that. (Bobby, Biology teacher)

The Burning Bush of Moses

For Bobby teaching outside is seeking out one's love for life. Bobby responds to my question "Why teach outside?" Bobby in this manner: "How will kids ever learn to love the bounty of life from within the classroom. I teach biology, its all about living: To live is to seek adventure, face change, grow, evolve, adapt to what life gives you, and that view of biology cannot be taught indoors; what a waste of instructional time!" Accordingly, Bobby values the purity, rawness, and unpredictability of nature's lessons. Teaching outside is an adventure because the lesson is being experienced in the heart of life. How then is the relational commitment altered in adventure?

Bobby stated that to teach Biology outside is to lead students into learning adventures and to keep students indoors was depriving them of rich experiences. Pedagogically, Bobby wanted the learning experience to be more than what was expected from typical lessons. Bobby wanted to excite, motivate, and enthrall students, and for the class to see biology as a learning adventure; achieving this means going outdoors, and seeking out the unplanned as an adventure in learning. When Bobby's class experienced the unplanned, there was no control of where this lesson was leading the students. The result was a silent class standing in awe, and I am curious to how this is adventurous.

It seems the media have created myths and expectations about adventures. Television, literature, Hollywood, and the news portray adventures on grand and heroic levels. What makes an adventure in pedagogy? Is an adventure in education a learning quest? Hoad (1996) qualifies adventure to contain degrees of risk, hazard, and chance (p. 6). However, there is more to the meaning of adventure, for within this larger word is an often missed consideration of advent, the coming of Christ—an adventure in spiritualism. A further simplification shows venture to mean random, by chance, and a speculative enterprise. For Bobby the burning tree represents a random moment in the migratory monarchs, and the class privileged an amazing event. I find it interesting that Bobby connects this lived experience to a past religious event of the burning bush and how Bobby observed a quiet class, a group showing reverence for an amazing moment in biology. Is the adventure for Bobby leading students to moments of learning that result in biophilia—students discovering a love of life? Beyond participating in exciting experiences, Latin is a reminder that adventure, adventūrus, means to arrive to see. As a biology teacher Bobby witnessed a class of children arriving to witness in an unpredictable moment, one that could never be planned for, a force or spirit in life—is that not in of it self an adventure in living in life? Bobby's leading and teaching outside the school was not wrought with the adventure as some looming fear of an unknown or great quest, or risky chance deciding life or death; but what is apparent from the anecdote is the adventure of the unexpected in living life, and for Bobby that is a shared moment as a teacher with students. This was obviously an important moment, considering many students returned with their teacher at the end of the day to re-experience the earlier lesson. To be indoors one would never have experienced the wonder of the natural world;

is that where the real risk lies: in never venturing out? In terms of pedagogical considerations, Bobby leads students outdoors, allowing them to arrive at a place where life can be experienced, and Bobby can experience the moment of advent with the class as they witness the adventure of biology.

Pedagogical Adventures

Having led numerous groups into the outdoors I strongly support van Manen's (1991) outside position on the pedagogical experience—the relational element in teaching is unique, even special, when teachers lead children into the outdoors. I just wish the view was more widely shared and the outside as an educational place for instruction was more widely accepted. Regardless, going outside was attractive to me and for many other teachers because of the sense of adventure that is somehow embedded in the notion of stepping outdoors. I still remember when I was a student the excitement I felt on those rare days when the teachers would take their class outdoors. With each group I, along with the teachers in this study, were encountering an experiential uncertainty: The natural obstacles found in the world, but not in the classroom, the safety of my students and myself, the hopes for a successful lesson plan in an uncontrollable environment, and the enjoyment of learning outdoors.

Teaching a lesson outside does not have the grandeur of Ulysses' (Homer, trans. 1992) classic tale nor is it the same epic magnitude of Gilgamesh (see Sandars, 1972), but each time I stepped outside the school as the teacher, I still fell a sense of adventure. There was anticipation, an air of excitement, and a realization of expectancy— expecting what? I began to question this reflective wonderment I was grappling to understand when

I reread the passage from Tolkien's (1999) *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring.* Gandalf stepped forward to lead the fellowship from the safety of Rivendell and Elrond's council to lead the fabled ring south into the dark lands of Mordor. As a reader I knew what Gandalf could expect, but would Gandalf consider the event before him an adventure? The risk of this venture was immense for the Fellowship; success was unfeasible to predict, for all the threats were impossible to envision. Gandalf comments on the nature of their quest: "Nor do any of us see clearly" (Tolkien, 1999, p. 362). This wise comment was in response to Elrond's council: "That is because you do not understand and cannot imagine what lies ahead" (Tolkien, p. 362). Despite this the great wizard still leads his company into the outer world, further than many have ever been in their lives.

I am sure even Gandalf could not see the future, the risks, and the torment that each in the fellowship would endure. He could imagine—as I can only do, when I prepare, as best I can, for the outside encounter—as do other teachers who lead learning adventures outside. In this chapter Jamie, Leslie, Jay, and Jody all relate to the uncertainty in not being able to see clearly what the outside experience will be as a lived experience for the students. However, all do agree that the notion of adventure bonds them to their class, like the fellowship, but it is uniquely pedagogical.

The Night Watcher

Going outside is accepting the possibility of the unplanned experience as part of the planned. However, this does not infer that teachers take children out for learning adventures without any responsible planning. Even Gandalf spent time planning and preparing for the journey that would lead the fellowship: "Aragorn and Gandalf walked together or sat speaking of their road and the perils they would meet; and they pondered the storied and figured maps and books of lore that were in the house of Elrond" (Tolkien, 1999, p. 363). And I suppose Frodo, like many students, "was content to lean on their guidance" (Tolkien, 1999, p. 363). Jamie shares a different aspect of adventure, simple, and like Bobby rooted in nature, well planned for, very safe, and one could call into question the excitement level, but fun and adventurous all the same. For Jamie it is the environment, the everyday in people's lives that can be made adventurous when we challenge ourselves to see things in a different way. Jamie understands adventure in taking something *old* and making it *new*, a fresh experience, like the night.

Jamie tells of a particular night doing an activity called the Night Watcher. Jamie approaches the class in the dark of night, dressed in a black cloak, sporting a blackened face, carrying a big old candle lantern. Using a mysterious husky voice, Jamie would then lead the students thought the night woods on a mini adventure that would teach the students about a different way of life; a night life.

> As I invite them to join me on my rounds make sure the night creatures are all okay I stress the importance of our duties for the night—to take care of a forgotten world. They are nervous, and some even scared, telling me they did not want to go, despite the duty. But I heighten the adventure by blackening their faces with the charcoal from my bag so they will blend into the night. Before we head into the woods my students start asking me if they could return to the camp to get their flashlights and I answer them with this hissing ***NO***! I got groans of discomfort. As they follow me I tell

> them they must be very silent, invisible, and gentle, as we are visitors in the night. This is a night of a planned series of mini adventures in discovering many of the night creatures, but the real adventure happened when we got back to field. All the stars are out, not a single cloud, and we had to pause in our duties to lie back looking up the sky. It was a moment of splendor and I sensed that my students finally relaxed and began to enjoy themselves. That was when the fireflies arrived. As we were looking up at the sky, the fireflies began lighting up over us. It was awesome. We were in the middle of our very own fireworks show and it was incredible. It was definitely a highlight for the night watcher crew. It was peaceful having our very own stars flickering at our fingertips right here on earth. The night is often feared as the unpredictable, but the fireflies made that moment a beautiful-peaceful night adventure for my students. (Jamie, At-Risk Support teacher)

Camp Mokagee is on the Old Windsor Road, just outside of Chester, and according to Jamie the woods there were a wonderful medium for teaching earth education. Jamie uses this activity to dispel the concept of the class that nature is something to be feared, and that it is risky going out at night. Jamie stated: "It probably more dangerous at night on the streets where these kids live. That's survival and not my idea of an adventure. I want them to see that the outside can be enjoyed, the night can be a safe adventure, and just as adventurous as many things that we could do with our students and in life. Jamie stated: "You do not need the high risk activities to call it an adventure. Adventure is exciting, risky, unpredictable, but it can also be a positive manageable experience where the risk is perceived, and just as exciting." The whole idea of the activity was to show that the night is a fun place to be, a safe place to be, and an adventure in discovering another secret nightlife that is drug and crime free. For many of Jamie's students the night means fear, negativity, something to avoid. And I think, for many of us, in being in the world we avoid being outside during the night, we retreat indoors to the light where it is safe. Even Jamie's students wanted to return to retrieve their flashlights. To go out at night is viewed as adventurous, risky, and for some foolhardy. Accordingly, Priest and Gass (1997) explain adventure education as

> primarily interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships that are unified through adventurous activities: compelling group and individual tasks that require problem solving, decision making, judgment, cooperation, communication, and trust. Adventure of course would be rooted in the notion of personal challenge where competence is tested against social, mental, and physical risks. The levels of risk vary from actual to perceived, but common to both perceptions the instructor is responsible for the well being of the participant and regardless of the level of risk the outcome is not a certainty. It is the uncertainty that must be overcome, and it is within this area of tension that people experience adventure. (pp. 17-18).

By taking the class outside, at night, Jamie is able to teach within this tension, and as a result create an adventure in learning. There is risk going outdoors and there is risk with nighttime activities, but manageable, and for the most part perceived. Important for Jamie's pedagogical belief was the mystery that was experienced with the students exploring the night. Not many of us take the time to discover mysteries of outside darkness. Many people retreat from the world to go inside at night. I often heard as a child that it is not safe outside past dark. Therefore, many of us remove ourselves from the outside world and retreat to an inside world that is deemed safe, predictable, and well lit.

What makes a venture and adventure and what is the significance of this for pedagogy? Priest and Gass (1997) contend that, if a participant experiences a genuine adventure, they, as a result, can understand themselves better because of the experience (p. 20). It could be that Jamie and Bobby have come to understand themselves better within outside environments, and as a result they gain a stronger pedagogical connection with their children because of the adventurous events. However, did Jamie and Bobby realize that central to their outside venture risk was central to the experience? If risk were removed from going outdoors, would the event be an adventure? From the Roman *adventūra*, it is implied that hazards, risk is based on chance (Hoad, 1996, p. 6). What are we chancing then when we decide to take children outdoors? Hunt (1990) refers to the meaning of chance as "the big accident" (p. 33). Hunt furthers his meaning of risk with the following: "aspects of nature that were beyond the instructors' control and that operated regardless of the good judgment of the instructor" (p. 34). Thus inherent in the lure of adventure is not knowing, despite sound lesson planning, prudent school policy, and specialized outdoor expertise of any teacher. Inside the classrooms teachers and school administrators work diligently to minimize all risks for their learners, but going outdoors many acknowledge that there will always be that chance of injury or death. However, these explanations of adventure do not quite capture the meaning of what it meant to be a teacher leading children outside the school. The anecdotes from Bobby and

Jamie did not focus on the drama of a high-risk event, yet they still return to adventure within their lived experience—fireflies, the dark, butterflies, stars, and silence.

Back in the Middle of Nowhere

McLellan's (2005) address in a principals' forum on current legal issues in public schools, defines negligence, due diligence, and risk as meaning very different things legally when teachers are off site, away from school, and on site within the school boundaries. Regardless, teachers must always show and "ensure reasonable care," and when teachers are away from sight of the building, the "level of risk, expectancy, concern, and blame is magnified when something goes wrong" (oral presentation). McLellan continues to make this legal point by citing that even routine injuries (common and little accidents) become complex issues for the simple reason of location—the proximity to the school. Do we assume that indoors is somehow safer than outdoors? In preserving pedagogical practice the law protects children by emphasizing the expectation of safety when teachers go outside, away from the school. My intention here is not to deter others from teaching outdoors, rather to illustrate the perception of risk that is extraneously attached to being outdoors with children. Additionally, I am not trying to deny the reality of risk associated with teaching outside, for there is risk. However, I am trying to reveal that adventure, curriculum, students, teachers, and schools can converge to result in a unique experience that is just outside the debate of safety.

As an extension to this debate is Leslie's lived experience, which situates the outdoor experience as an adventure, but for Leslie it was a special focus on the welfare of a class of deep woods explorers. The uniqueness and pedagogical significance for Leslie is living the adventure with children. The lived experience of being with children pedagogically outside is reduced to sustainability; a community meeting their basic needs as they face natural challenges together. Leslie recalls a hiking trip on the Liberty Trail as adventure because of the physical challenge that ***just*** pushes students to and a bit beyond their limits: "They are not crying, but they are working hard trying to reach the daily destination." However, central to Leslie's anecdote is the constant focus on student well-being and their essential needs. What draws Leslie to this outside teaching place is the beauty of the original landscape that naturally allows the students to identify and experience many natural geographic formations. I wonder if part of the adventure for Leslie's class was going to a new land; a place never seen before, for this was the first time that Leslie's students experienced this area near their school.

> The kids and I slip right into explorer mode on some great adventure. The further we went into the wilderness, the larger and older the trees became, the more real the adventure. This understanding came to me when I saw the struggle many of them were having, as we were nearing the end point of the 16 km hike. Every step was taking us farther away from comfort, things we know and trust, into a land of unknown, and we were coming to the end physically. That last 4km was a mental walk, students encouraging students, and I motivating my own sore feet and back. I know we really just wanted to stop and, for some, go home. And I know they are asking: Is this all worth it? But that is all part of getting to these remote places: the physical discomfort and mental-emotional uncertainty. I decided to call a break because I knew they were exhausted. When they dropped their

> packs, and slumped to the ground with their water bottles and gorp [trail snack] I thought the trip was pretty much over for these kids were physical hurting. One student then asked me if we were almost there, I hesitated, I did not want to answer. I figured if they knew the truth, well that would be it. I took a moment before I said, "I think we have about four or five km to go." What I saw was shared nods, arms raising up shaking fists in jubilation, high fives, and thumbs up with these looks of absolute satisfaction on their faces. Many of them were uttering awesome, excellent, and finally, come on lets do it! And we got right back onto the trail. We are living the adventure and excitement of exploring unknown places. We are back in the middle of nowhere and just getting there gives us a sense of accomplishment. Getting out there is so simple: you hike. But deciding to stay with the decision to seek out the adventure, that's the real challenge. We could have turned back at any time. (Leslie, Geography teacher)

Knowing the remoteness of the location, seeing the vastness of space that extends within this wilderness preserve gives it a sense of adventure. When an individual decides to travel to these remote places they know they are carrying everything needed to survive, and relying on the very basic skills, like navigation, shelter building, and weather interpretation; this all heightens the adventure. Leslie sees this as "not standard school" where students are trying to pay attention to someone teaching. The adventure outside for Leslie is facing and living within adventurous challenges of the natural world: coyotes howling at night, food bag raid from suspected raccoons, impassable swamps that required re-planning the map route, torrential rains, swollen rivers that forced classes to abandon the trip to return to the trailhead, and freak snow storms in May; but it is safe and is the perfect perceived-adventure spot. This is possible only if groups are prepared and trips well-planned. For students it is real wilderness. The adventure in Leslie's experience is sharing in the moments when children are "doing it" for themselves. The adventure for Leslie pedagogically is: "Allowing them to face a challenge head on. I can see their growth in character happen right before my eyes." However, Leslie is adamant that part of the adventure is having such heightened concern for the well being of each class member and listening to each of their versions of their mini adventure on getting to their backwoods locations.

Nadler and Luckner (1992) state that participants (which for this study this includes teachers) experience the following:

> feelings are experienced in a clearer, more intense manner than they are at home or …[school]. The uniqueness of these feelings and experiences allow the group members to see themselves and their potentials differently. They physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and environmental awareness are magnified. (p. 3)

Nadler and Luckner indicate that the richness must be teased out of the experience, and it is the telling, or their notion of processing, that reveals the adventure in the experience. Leslie admits: "I suppose I live out some of the adventure when telling my part as well!" A close colleague of mine would often comment that the adventure would never be over until the telling, and that as humans we relive the adventure again and again by our retelling (Richards, personal communication, planning sessions, 1996–1998). Yes, there was real risk, and yes, disaster could have resulted, but sound planning and competent leadership allowed Leslie to lead students to face a daunting task in the wilderness. The confidence to lead permits Leslie to seek out the adventure, push some limits, and live these moments with students. In the challenges of adventures, is Leslie experiencing pedagogy because the whole person has become engaged within the learning environment?

There Were Ants, Ants …

Jay experiences a whole-person involvement in the outside adventure as exhausting. "When I go on field trip or outside with students, I come in exhausted." However, this exhaustion is not a negative scholastic experience, for Jay takes great pleasure in working with children outdoors. For Jay this enjoyment is the dynamic in educational events that engage students and their teacher. The dynamic results in a pedagogical excitement that opens up to Jay's lived experience that reveals an adventure of discovery. This is not the excitement of a competition in who finds more, or who has the best mark, but it becomes student ownership; their excitement in what they find; their own discoveries, or a first time discovery. Yet, Jay states that outside, the real hope is students discovering their life lessons by doing the Ant Crawl. This outside lesson is full of student comments engaged in moments of discovery: "Look what we found. Come here, you gotta see this. Wow! What is this?"

> There is a huge anthill at the back of the school. Each student finds an ant and has to follow it, for as long as they can, and make notes of everything it does. We are in constant motion responding to thousands of discoveries. That's the adventure—the discovery! Some of us can travel many meters

> in a class. This particular class had energy; they were on some crazy-unpredictable adventure. When I finally brought them in we debriefed their discoveries, it just blew me away when they made the life connection to the natural behaviors of the ants by making comparisons to human behavior. These students developed an extension of ant life into a metaphor in understanding their own lives. Then the outside discussion turned, folded right into the lesson outcome, how could I find a healthy pace in life and find balance with all the competing priorities. Managing time allows us to seek out and discover in life. The kids started saying we have to stay connected to our lives because there is so much happening all around us, and we must take time, like the ant's focus, and resist the rat race because there are amazing discoveries to be had if we slow down and really look. It is physically hard to follow your ant's every move, quite exhausting, but it's the best tired feeling to have. (Jay, Career and Life Management teacher)

Jay states that not every class lends itself to going out, but when the opportunity is present Jay asserts that the teacher should take responsibility for the chance to have students experience even a simple lesson outdoors. Jay describes teaching outside as follows: "There is nothing like it, teaching a class outside. I think it is just feelings of childhood wonder again; the freedom to be a kid again and to go on adventures, live and discover in the realm of the unknown for awhile. I do know the energy it takes being a kid is huge because I am always exhausted and so are my students." I recall this type of tired, because of an adventurous excursion, as a good tired. According to Jay, the adventure rests in ants teaching students an outcome in Career and Life Management, a life lesson in taking time. In short, if we do not take the time in life so much can pass us by. Jay experiences adventure in the little things the outdoors can offer. Jay also was adamant to share that much of the adventure is in what the class says about the outside lesson; the connections made to their own lives. For Jay this is far more exciting and interesting option to what has been perceived as an indoor activity: time management. My sense is it is the unpredictability of discussion flow, student life connections, and tangible course links are rooted in this adventure of ant-sight and the interesting finds that students can associate with their lives.

Rest in Peace

Jody's lived experience captures adventure in a repeated activity. Jody's adventure as a teacher of Mi'Maq Studies is one of renewal. Jody's curriculum is linked to outdoor places and activities and the recreation component is hard to suppress or ignore. However, the cultural learning and the activities associated with the outside lesson supports that there is a *re-creation of self* as a learner in the outdoor lesson. Jody claims inner curiosity as an educator or learner, and the location of the lesson, as contributors to the spiritual supporting the whole person. Jody sees this as a genuine modeling by ascribing what one holds true and of value to the kids in an authentic way, and this, at times requires going out and seeking from the world those lived experiences that bring the person closer to self. In Jody's account there is adventure in this lived experience of spiritualism that is not possible indoors. Jody tells of a special and profound place called Cape Split. Legend has it that this is where Glooscap, the creator of the Mi' Maq world, laid down to finally rest. This piece of land that juts into the Bay of Fundy is comprised of jagged fingers that represent his feathers on his head dress, the island off to the west is his pot, the island to the north his kettle. According to Jody this is a spiritual place.

> I know I have hiked the Split at least 20 times, but it is new every time because I am re-experiencing it through their eyes. This is not like watching a movie for the second time or rereading a book. It's adventurous because I am able to recreate my self as a person in their learning, through their experience. Before I knew the history, I felt something that went far beyond the spectacular view. It is a deep spiritual awakening, and the kids feel it. Coming here is a spiritual adventure. This has nothing to do with religion; it's the spirit of being a human being in this world. I want to re-experience that encounter every day; that initial feeling of a spiritual self is awesome. When I hike out there with kids I can relive the adventure. It is always fascinating because every group is a little bit different. During, my last trip leading a group of students out of the maple grove at the end of the Split they paused as if by some silent command, right at the edge of the grassy field that gently rises before them, obscuring the spectacular ocean view. I know it wasn't the sight of landscape before them that made them stop. I had to encourage them to climb the rise. They started whispering among themselves; there was a little nervous buzz. Some giggled, resumed their conversations with their buddies, and finally started to follow. As they gained height they could begin to see what we came for: the jagged points of land sticking out of the water (see Figure 20). For some reason

> the group starts to quiet, as if out of respect or something. The grassy cliff comes to a point and we can go no farther. It is here I know I see kids change at that moment when they look out over the Split. Their faces have this look of reverence. It’s as if Glooscap has touched their very soul from his resting place. Somehow with the kids the experience is always richer for me, more connected, more holy then if I go alone. (Jody, History and Mi’ Maq teacher)

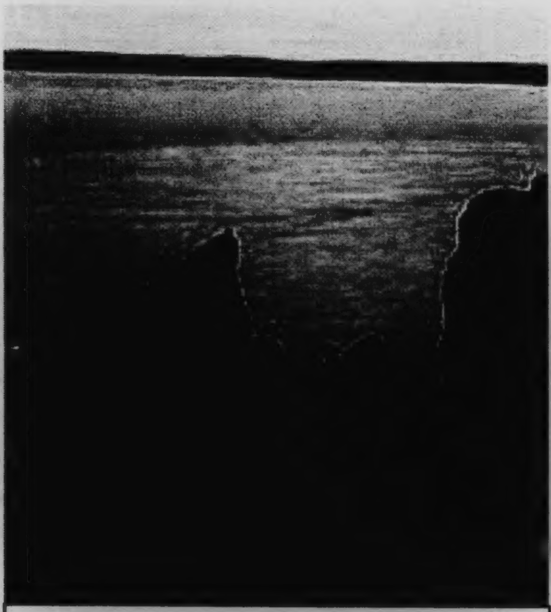

Figure 20: The rock outcrops are believed to be Glooscap’s feathers. Photograph by A. Foran.

Is the visit to Cape Split a pedagogical experience in spiritualism that is connected to an ancient world by the place? Is Jody recreating a spirit of self as the students awaken to a deeper sense of self in the world by being at the Split? Is there an adventure in going deep inside our being? When I stepped out on this edge with Jody, I too was on an edge of something, and it went well beyond the legend of Glooscap. This type of edge is risky, challenging, or scary for many people, and this edge is evident in public education. However, I do not think the adventure here in Jody’s lived experience lies in the risk that was discussed earlier. Risk, despite the differences in this thesis, is in meaning and nature, a part of adventure. Plato stresses the importance of risk: “If risks must be run, should one run them where success will improve people?" (Grube, 1974, p. 128). It is impossible to guarantee that an individual will self-actualize because of some learning experience. However, Jody has run this spiritual risk, the adventure of self, countless times and has been able to relive the spiritual self through the students awakening. Jody calls the moment on the cliff edge, as students look down into the cold ocean, leaning into the breeze to see just a bit more "a pure silence." Wurdinger (1997) firmly states that risk is crucial to any adventure: "Facing the physical challenge of activities such as kayaking or mountaineering gets our adrenaline flowing and may even cause us, for an instant, to look death in the face. Risk is used to foster intellectual, physical, and spiritual growth, and is the element that distinguishes adventure education" (p. 43). I do not see this level of risk in Jody's lived experience. The hike was only moderate in excursion, and there was no sense of excitement, but there was a movement within my own spiritual sensitivity.

The risk is to go inward and explore another world, a world that is not legend, earth, sky, or water, but a place that is uniquely yours. Jody comments that the Split is one of the great adventures for the Mi'Maq Studies class. Wurdinger (1997) positions adventure within the center of someone's personal growth, and for educators concerned about the significance of pedagogy in their relations with children it is the how and why in a students' growth that must be reflected upon. For many students this inner journey in pure silence may be one of their greatest adventures in life. Pedagogically, is the adventure in leading students to experience a profound moment for self? Seeking out and experiencing the spiritual is an adventure for many that is not defined by high risk activities or the rush of adrenaline. Can adventure be a silent inward experience of humanity, discovering an aspect of a spiritual self in this world? When does an event qualify as an adventure? Are there degrees to adventure like intensity? Is learning an adventure? Is pedagogy by nature an adventure?

School: A Pedagogical Venture

Sandars (1972) has noted that Gilgamesh's epic was one of pure adventure (p. 7). Like many after him, Gilgamesh too set out on a life changing adventure. Is that the intent of Jody's hike out to the split to conduct class? Gilgamesh's quest was set on discovering eternal life. Gilgamesh did not have a class, but he did have his servant friend Enkidu following his lead facing the risks that the wilderness of his world offered as barriers, but still Gilgamesh had to face the uncertainty of his journey into the Land of Humbaba (Sandars, p. 72). The personal growth that motivated Gilgamesh in this journey was to conquer Humbaba so "all the world shall know of it … and leave behind … an enduring name" (Sandars, p. 73). In the end Gilgamesh fails to achieve immortal life, for a serpent snatches the flower of youth from his hand. In despair Gilgamesh returns to his kingdom city of Uruk. However, the following is noted:

> The work of Gilgamesh, the king, who knew the countries of the world. He was wise, he saw mysteries and knew secret things, he brought us a tale of the days before the flood. He went a long journey, was weary, worn out with labour, and returning engraved on a stone the whole story. (Sanders, p. 117)

Gilgamesh discovered mortality, and in this discovery became closer to the spirit of what it means to be human in this world. Even Gilgamesh had to tell and story his adventures of experientially going out into the world and facing the unknown. I do not sense that Jody was intent on conquering as part of the adventure, nor was the purpose to face great risks. The adventure was allowing the students to go inward to experience something special and unique, their own spiritual identity. The aspect of experientially living the adventure is key here for an outside pedagogy. In the classroom students and teachers live the adventures of others, and for the most part an academic adventure is based on the cognitive or the imagination, but inside, safely nestled in the classroom. However, to experientially live out this aspect of pedagogical adventure requires a heightened level of engagement. Thus again, teachers may need to return to the complexities of experiential education as it applies to adventure education.

I suppose one could argue that these anecdotes were pure adventure and some I am sure will debate the opposite. One can discover many similarities in the anecdotes with the focus on the learning activity, action, and support in the activity, feedback, and debriefing. These are all phases that the teachers in my study alluded to as part of the adventure. The most significant area was the debriefing or the telling. There is a compelling need to tell and share one's stories of adventure, even Gilgamesh. Kolb (1984) offers a spiral analogy that depicts experiential learning as a cycle of phases. But, as Priest and Gass (1997) point out, one through which the learning can become transferable. Kolb's model supports the use of concrete experiences, actions, and observations by reflection. The reflections help students and teachers form abstract concepts and personal generalizations that are garnered directly through their own experiences. With experiential education the learners are able to apply the implications of learned concepts immediately, within the actual field, and then transfer their connected knowledge into a new concrete-learning experience—adventure can then become an educational site of powerful learning. The ability to transfer knowledge as it immediately applies to the unique set of environmental circumstances or new experiences could leave an educator questioning the dynamism and power of the experiential approach. If I can extend this one step further, teaching outside is more than just showing up for class, for the teacher thoughtfully must lead students to a place of learning that is charged with energy and consequences, allowing for the lesson itself to be an adventure in learning.

Pedagogically, teaching outside experientially "is nothing more or less than sound pedagogy intended to maximize the learning and growth of all participants" (Berv, 1998, p. 122). The theories or learning models do not explain or show the richness of the relationships that are formed because of outside teaching. Outside teaching lends itself to a quality relationship that is unique when compared to student relationships inside the classroom. Each teacher has offered an anecdote in which this relationship can be shown pedagogically. The importance here is not the theory or lack of theory, because pedagogy is not about empirical truth. The significance, pedagogically, is how teachers were able to see the child in learning outside—and that, in and of itself, is an adventure for the teachers, parents, or anyone in a caring relationship with children.

An Outside Place Called School

Adventure only captures a very small facet of the outside teaching experience. These teachers shared numerous other *possibilities* for showing their experience of an outdoor pedagogy. Each lived experience revealed something unique in the relationship that is central for all teachers, indoors and out. To think that adventure dominates the lived experience for these teachers would downplay the need for pedagogy to be apparent, first, before going outdoors. It is my belief that these teachers were pedagogical in their decision to take children outdoors; they recognized a need for student learning and they allowed students to follow them safely outdoors to an outside place. And yes, going out to learn is an adventure that is exciting and fun, but the pedagogical experience is much more rich and layered in meaning. To see only the adventure is too narrow; pedagogy is too complex and subtle (van Manen, 2006) to be limited to a single explanation or lived experience.

Adventure was an important element in the outside place called school, but the teachers in my study wanted to affirm their reasons for seeking out this adventure, even if it was indirect. They offered statements of self-understanding that were expressed as a part of their reflections in telling their adventures that helped clarify their pedagogical intentions. Each teacher kept making reference to the needs of their students, the importance of going out for their students, and the benefit of being outside for their students. The final comments I use from each of the teachers signify a pedagogical responsibility that naturally emerged from being with children in an outside place they called *school*.

Kelly's comments parallel Arendt's (1978) position on teachers' preparing children for the world and school as that in-between place. Kelly sees beyond the building with a more expanded notion of school as an outside place with youth.

> I want them to feel and know more of who they are before they leave school. Learning outside is a hands-on way to get ready for the real world. I have always found, in wilderness or in an outdoor experience, I get the real person. This relationship is different from inside connections with kids. When we go outdoors, we use the natural world to speed up and

> heighten that experience because you cannot disconnect from it with the ring of a bell; there is no escaping what the world had to offer. You deal with it, accept it, and embrace it. Going outside to teach is more than just doing a lesson out there, it is facing the world together in a natural struggle. (Kelly, Physical Education teacher)

The natural struggle is the unique facet of Kelly's relational understanding. Kelly wants to lead and to appropriately challenge students in order for them to discover something real about themselves before they finish senior high. Outside learning for Kelly goes far beyond the academic graduation learnings.

Jody's pedagogical intent is based on a reconnection to the world, and this carries strongly into the relational aspect Jody values with students. An outside teaching space is one of comfort and community.

> When I take my students outside the connection to the outdoors and one another is unique. Somehow the outside teaching experience makes me ***more*** of a teacher, even though I am teaching the same lesson plan. Outside teaching goes way beyond the learning in the plan. When I am out there with kids the connection is not a singular experience; we are all linked at some level to the natural world and that makes it more of a learning community. (Jody, History teacher)

Does an outside pedagogy allow a teacher to feel more connected to children? Does a *pedagogical seeing* of children allow one to become more of a teacher? Conceptually this is of significance considering pedagogy must take into account how a teacher sees them selves as a teacher. And does this translate into lived experiences where teachers feel more teacher-like? I suspect that the responsibility associated with teaching in the outdoors places a greater emphasis on the pedagogical aspect in the act of teaching; thus the outside may very well magnify the relational element between students and their teachers. I wonder if the community of learners forms because outside the school allows the connections to develop naturally, making them more real to the class? I must consider the possibility that inside teaching may require more effort on the part of the teacher to connect students to the outside world, and teaching indoors maybe a greater challenge pedagogically.

For Chris the outside teaching place is all about the real, the concrete, and the tangible experience. The significance for Chris is how *real* the relationships were pedagogically. Before taking students outdoors Chris delivered scientific lesson of the earth; teaching outside unearthed a more concrete and humble purpose for lesson plans.

> Never have I experienced such a strong sense of awareness of being in a place. I know this was possible because I was with my students. I wonder now if the students were experiencing that sense of realness. Is realness a kind of feeling? It took the outside classroom to teach me why I teach—it's about making it real, and being a real person to them. Teaching, if done appropriately is meaningful if the engagement goes beyond the curriculum and the exam—teachers need to see their students as real, not just some abstract name for the semester. (Chris, Earth Sciences teacher)

Going outdoors has the potential to put things into perspective. Direct experiences have a similar likelihood to teach effective lessons. For Chris, it was undeniable, the outdoors presents real learning experiences, and during the engagement Chris was able to see something unique in the learners involved. Chris reflected that the outside teaching place gave perspective of the learning experience that was profound meaningful, and beyond the abstract.

Life and school can become overwhelmingly abstract for many of us. Time spent in the outdoors can be a potent equalizer; simplifying the priorities we need as people. For Jamie this simplification is key to the pedagogical aspects to working with at-risk youth, and the outdoors is the fundamental learning place in this relationship.

> It simplifies everything. When you take a group of kids the outdoors puts our lives into perspective. As a group we see what is important in our immediate futures and that allows us to make the most of our time together. Going outside allows us to fall into another rhythm of living; a rhythm that does not subscribe to cell phones, e-mail, TV, pop culture. It is that way of living that obscures our self-understanding. When you strip society away, you are naked to the world, and the world does not judge. That's the vantage point of simplicity. When it's simple we can learn: subjects, lessons, self or the world. As a group we know that when we are at the vantage point it is when we are most vulnerable. We really see each other as human, no bullshit baggage. (Jamie, At-Risk Student Program teacher)

Jamie's classes experience the here and now in their collective lives together. Jamie refers to the vantage point where the relationship is clear, insightful, and central to the reason they are outside. Jamie states that when it is simple they can learn, but this vantage point leaves them at their most vulnerable.

Bobby states there is little need to test this learning. Bobby is drawn to the outdoors to learn lessons that extend beyond established, abstract-curriculum documents. For Bobby this is a deliberate act of teaching, and pedagogically it is ***felt*** between student and teacher.

> I do not need to manufacture a learning experience. My outside lessons are not some contrived thing issued by the Department of Education as some outcome that has to be learned. Basically, if I go outdoors, the places where I want to go are the places where the natural environment will create what I need to teach. Teaching outside is knowing that every action has purpose. And the purpose of learning extends, not as an abstraction, but as a *felt* thing between my kids and me. I do not need some test or exam to measure my lesson. Learning outdoors does not allow me to be a bystander where I transmit information. I think the felt thing is being a teacher right in the middle of life with your kids. (Bobby, Biology teacher)

Teaching outside is laden with pedagogy's purpose that has little to do with Department of Education outcomes or tests. For Bobby the outside teaching place provides the elements of life, all that is needed, but the significance in going outside to learn is the purpose that binds a teacher to students—pedagogy. I wonder if Bobby experiences inside relationships as somewhat artificial in comparison?

Is this the reason why these teachers gravitated to the outdoors? Are these teachers experiencing something in the outside teaching that was more genuine, meaningful, and with purpose, allowing for a mindful pedagogy? Leslie states that in the outside place the learning experience is richer, and to not go would do a disservice to children.

> Why would you stay inside? Geography is a course that lends itself to the outdoors. What I can accomplish out here for learning outweighs the risk. It comes down to good preparation, no different that being well prepared for the inside lesson. The difference is that the experience out here is richer, more real. Outside teaching is not about pretend. I find the outdoor lesson is different, the learning experience stays with you, becomes you somehow? It does not fade like the early-morning dream. This is not saying that lessons inside the classroom do not carry weight in what students learn, but I am sure 25 years from now my students will remember those outside units more so than the indoor ones. There is a quality that is hard to define, but many of my students acknowledge it exists when we go outdoors. (Leslie, Geography teacher)

Is the richness that Leslie is referring to the transformative nature of leaning outside? Lessons outside have the potential to stay with students, making a difference in their learning and impacting their growth. Pedagogically, Leslie is concerned with providing honest, real learning experiences for students.

The outdoors is not about pretending and this balances the risk factor in teaching in an outside place. Jay strived to make the learning experience real for students by bringing the learning alive.

> No one wants to teach Career and Life Management not many students really want to take CALM either. With my course assignment I knew I was

> against the wall at the beginning of this school year, but I had to make it different. I had to challenge their senses, make it alive, and to suck them into the learning—make this a positive learning experience. My attendance numbers are way. My students come because they are anticipating: "What are we going to do today? Where are we going today? Being outside is naturally stimulating; it's a break from a routinized learning experience. And when you hit high school there is no denying that you have spent many hours sitting at a desk answering worksheet after worksheet. Teaching outside is to experience newness and change in all its forms. I suppose if the novelty of this experience wears off and my kids start skipping you will probably find them hiding out indoors. (Jay, Career and Life Management teacher)

Jay's teaching experience in an outside place was to pedagogically create positive and stimulating learning experiences. This want is no different from what is desired by teachers within most classrooms. Jay takes learning outdoors to open the experience to the novelty, and newness of being outdoors. For high school students, learning away from the desk is a fresh change and an exciting venture, and Jay wants to make this part of the learning experience as something students will anticipate going to CALM.

Only an Indoor Venture?

When did learning become an indoor venture? I ask this question now in light of the anecdotes shared by the teachers that showed a deliberate decision to go outdoors that specifically was not just related to adventures. The notion of adventure seems to be a sensible concluding point, for there were many instances in the anecdotes when the theme of adventure would cross into other possible areas because the meaning of adventure did not capture the lived experience entirely. There is more to the relational experience than the definition of adventure can explain. Going outside for these teachers was more than a venture. These lived experiences have shown that being outdoors with children was a significant teaching experience that allowed pedagogy to become primary in the act of teaching. However, teaching has evolved greatly from the days of informal gatherings, prior to public school buildings, when education was a parental responsibility, a tutoring arrangement, an apprenticeship, or a provision made to a select few by a religious authority. School has developed into a formal-institutional structure in educating children, that is highly organized to include grade levels, outcomes to mark progression, established-institutional modes of rational, subject-specific instruction, and credentialed teachers who are highly skilled and trained to work within school buildings. This evolution of educational development has tended to leave the outdoors outside the ways we teach our children. An important discovery from the shared anecdotes is the existence of a phenomenological moment, when pedagogy is a realized as concrete experience between the teacher and students; it is a lived experience that supersedes the dominant indoor agenda.

CHAPTER 11

PEDAGOGY OF PLACE

The outside and being outdoors can have various meanings and this is especially true for the teachers involved in this study. Yet, the meanings presented here are limited, for the focus embedded within the thesis was the pedagogical significance of the outside-teaching moment. As well, there are practical limits of being able to capture all possible human experiences despite the specific focus—pedagogy. And within this particular focus it would be impossible to present an exhaustive telling of outside pedagogical moments. Regardless, a common concern among the teachers in this study was the value that an outside place had on the relationship between them, as teachers, and their students. Pedagogy was a rich experience in an outside place, and this was an experience that was not common for their teaching indoors. However, it is important to note that the teachers did not claim indoor teaching as not valued nor unappreciated. The central pedagogical message was that an *outside place* allowed for a different relational understanding.

For these teachers, pedagogy and place became fused in the instructional lesson. Pedagogy became something as *understood* for these teachers because of place; they could *see* the significance of the relational qualities existing between teachers and students. Conversely, place became a shared experience between teachers and students; not just a geographical location that was walked over. Thus the outside allowed for a more sensitive connection between teachers, their students, and the place they found themselves in for learning. The value in this discovery is significant for educators because the outside does influence teacher-student relationship in unique and special ways.

The pedagogy of place showed that for these teachers the place they were in became their world. The student in that place allowed the teacher to *see* the relational connection beyond contractual responsibility for a class list. The teachers in this study experienced time not as a mechanistic division in the day, but as embodied and part of the learning process. Time was not something that governed them. Time was fluid between teaching and curriculum, students and learning, binding them to place. The outside place allowed these teachers to become attuned, not to the lesson as an abstraction, but to the student in a place as connected to a genuine process. Teachers seemingly became *teacherly* as they guided their students to and through outside-learning experiences.

Another common connection between these teachers was the uncertainty in being outside pedagogically. Each teacher struggled to reconcile him or herself to learning lessons outdoors. And as stated earlier, the outdoors is still considered on the margins in an educative sense and for some, a place to avoid. Yet, the outdoors allowed these teachers to experience teaching as a rich and meaningful experience; a distinct relational connection that did not occur indoors. I have become an advocate for these teachers by giving them a voice to express their experiences to show the pedagogical significance that occurred when teaching outdoors. Furthermore, the certainty captured in this study was the value of relationality in an outside-instructional place.

I ask: When did the indoors come to dominate our choice as the instructional place? I would like to turn to Tuan's (1977) discussion on space and place: "Place is security, space is freedom: we are attached to the one and long for the other" (p. 3). I am sure as communities developed during the settling periods of North America and educational needs surfaced, community members longed for a place to call school. With the harshness of the environment there was no doubt a need to establish a specific place to call school (see Figure 21). Thus in North America, on the frontier, we could witness the one-room school house being built as a place of learning along side places of worship, medical care, and governance. The frontier lands are viewed as wilderness, wild, threatening, adventurous, and harsh, these buildings gave people a sense of control and belonging (Markus, 1993). Therefore, learning became something that people could control, regulate, systemize, measure, and formalize. Thus a more regulated knowledge could then be transferred back into the community to contribute to the progress advancing a way of life. However, as school became formalized it became a learning experience that was predominately confined to an indoor environment. Yet, Tuan (1977) explains experience as something that is related to the external world: "To experience in the active sense requires that one venture forth into the unfamiliar and experiment with the elusive and the uncertain … one must dare to confront the perils of the new" (p. 8). In short, Tuan is refereeing to humanities need to seek adventures, and, for education, seeking adventures can take us outdoors. How then does pedagogy significant to the teaching experience outside the school, when much of our

Figure 21: A typical outside space for instructional purposes. Photograph by A. Foran.

formal schooling is an indoor act?

The Need for Indoors—Longing For Outdoors

Schools, like mothers and fathers, provide a sense of stability and security. And having this comfort of a defined place allows people to venture out into the world knowing they can return to the security of permanence. In other words, does leaving a school to leave behind leave teachers *placeless* (momentarily) while they explore the larger world? I am curious if this need for place has come to anchor our associations for learning to a specific stable place, a building of permanence called school. As we age into adulthood do we become attached to the physical place of school as the only place to learn? Is this a sentiment of place learning that which dominates our relational intentions as teachers? However, being in school, in a building does not mean absolute comfort or satisfaction in the learning process, and many humans do long for what is out there in the world. By nature many of us are curious and tend to want to explore, to discover, to connect naturally, and to experience other ways of learning and being in the world.

Why then would teachers be drawn to the outside place for instruction? Outside space is seen as a symbol of freedom, action, and potential in the Western world; however, this view is not limited to a positive notion: On the negative side, space and freedom can be threatening. To be too open or too free is to be vulnerable for in the openness there are no real established pathways, signposts or fixed pattern of established human meaning. A constant requirement for human beings is both space and place—inside and outside. Yet it seems many of us live within dialectical movements between shelter and venture, attachment and freedom: In open space I am acutely aware of my need for place (lie school) and in the confines of a school place, I am haunted by the call of open spaces of the world. The outside is a presence I want to lead children to experience. Seemingly, the teachers in my study are teaching in this dialectical tension of wanting the outdoors as part of the direct experience, but needing the security of the indoors considering the responsibilities? I am sure that is the tension of indoor-outdoor that resulted in distinct pedagogical experiences. But we tend to teach and relate to children from the indoors; why the disconnect from the outdoors?

Part of humanities disconnect from nature, the outdoors, could be based on Eisler's (1988) social models: dominator and partner (p. xvii). Eisler has traced the development of humankind and points out there was a time in our past where we were at one with nature under a partnership model that allowed nature, men, and women to coexist in peace and equality. Archeological findings "also suggest that our early ancestors recognized that we and our natural environment are integrally linked … and that all nature must therefore be treated with respect (Eisler, p. 3). Eisler has shown the Cretan civilization of 6000 B.C.E. to be a society where oneness and love of nature was central to an equal partnering of gender (p. 32). This was a society where the "worship of nature pervaded everything" (p. 34). Important here for this study was that the Minoans sought not to only worship nature, but have their architecture reflect their beliefs and through the design allow them to enjoy nature as freely as possible (p. 35). This provides a contrast to how schools are built in modern day, which cuts children off from the natural world until the recess or noon hour bell rings.

To illustrate this point of disconnect I could have drawn on numerous examples of ancient civilizations that was deeply connected to their outside world, but Eisler's work presents an important consideration. After this golden age in human relationships with each other and to the natural world, history took a turn. Nomadic invaders, with their conquer mentality, brought war, and social and religious brutality to old Europe, and in the wake of a series of invasions by the Kurgans in 4200 B.C.E., 3200 B.C.E., and 2800 B.C.E. male dominance and the power of the sword (p. 44). The fall of this peaceful Europe allowed a social transformation that saw the dominator model reign supreme and a society that became hierarchal, systematic, controlled, scientific, war-like, and centralized, away from the natural world and past rhythms of a natural world (see Eisler).

My point of disconnect is not to argue for an abandonment of modern lifestyles or way of education. Rather, to see how and why as a people we could have removed ourselves from the natural world in favor of a more dominate inside world. However, Tuan (1977) reminds us that all animals on earth do not live exclusively within nature, open to the elements of the natural world (p. 101). We retreat to shelters that are constructed to protect and comfort us from the world. Has this retreat to shelter pulled our way of learning indoors allowing for a more controlled experience? It is important to consider the affect buildings have on human beings. Tuan states:

> The building or architectural complex now stands as an environment capable of affecting the people who live in it … [this] space can refine human feeling and perception … Architectural space—even a simple hut surrounded by cleared ground—can define such sensations and render them vivid. Another influence is this: the built environment clarifies social roles and relations. People know better who they are and how they ought to behave when the arena is humanly designed rather than nature's raw stage. Finally, architecture "teaches …" In the absence of

> books and formal instruction, architecture is a key to comprehending reality. (p. 102)

I would have to disagree with Tuan on this final point. From the anecdotes shared by these teachers, I believe that the rawness of the outdoors was key to the relationship, the indoors was more abstract, and outside was pivotal in understanding reality. However, I do agree that the structure of the school itself has defined our roles as learners and teachers and the perception of where learning should take place. The building itself has the power to define (Markus, 1993).

The Universal Antithesis—Inside and Outside

As I wrestled with my pedagogical tensions (inside-outside teaching), I gravitated to the work of Di Leo and Jacobs (2004), who ask if classrooms even matter? The premise of their work questions the dominance of inside traditional sites of learning and poses pedagogical research from various learning alternatives. This timely work challenges the educator's reliance on traditional classrooms—inside teaching. They position the changing perceptions of the classroom as an unprecedented process of radical change:

> There is now a growing population of students who seldom set foot in a traditional classroom. Their pedagogical sites center on computer screens, televisions, and printed study guides. In addition to these market- and technology-driven changes, innovative teachers are taking their teaching outside the traditional classroom. Whether it is trips to locations of interest or job training in the field, learning outside the classroom is becoming more popular. (p. 1)

The changing classroom is occurring because of technological innovations; however, I was surprised to read that Di Leo and Jacobs considered the simple act of going outside as innovative. I always felt that the outdoors was a natural element in our teaching and learning, and that as schools evolved we somehow became stuck within an indoor structure for teaching (see Figure 22). Tuan (1977) indicates: "The designed environment serves an educational purpose. In some societies the building is the primary text for handing down a tradition, for presenting a view of reality" (p. 112). I wonder if this tradition was not what, during the progressive movement in education (see Pinar et al., 1996), established the importance of school buildings over the natural world, the desk as the pedagogical site for learning, and hallways as paths to follow as students seek out the next scheduled learning experience.

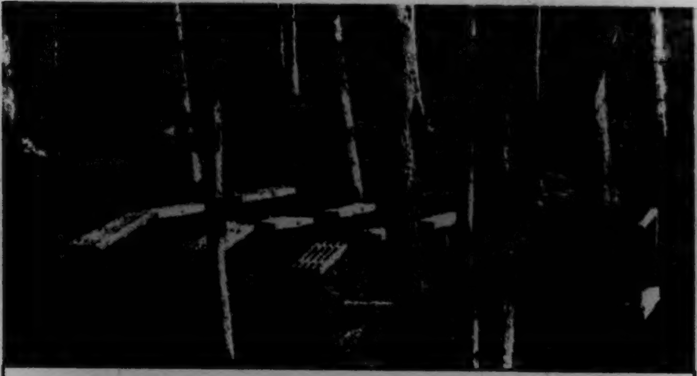

Figure 22: Outside space designed to reflect an indoor teaching practice. Photograph taken by A. Foran.

Di Leo and Jacobs (2004) ask, what is a classroom? "The *thisness* of the classroom is always already uniquely defined through the interrelation of its place with a particular set of individuals … as a site of interaction or struggle is not generalizable … It is a specific interaction between a place and individuals" (p. 3). In short, Di Leo and Jacobs contend that the relational interaction between students and teacher in the same room as a place of learning is no longer a constant: "Pedagogical theory and analysis must be prepared to open up the space of the pedagogical to multifarious relations between class space and individuals" (p. 3). Di Leo and Jacobs affirm that scholars need to stress the importance of the relationship between place and learning. Outside teaching intimately connects to pedagogical relations, and what emerged from the anecdotes was that power of place was central in the relationship.

The Power of Place

Bringing the discussion of power of place into this conclusion is of great importance, considering the dominate concept that education is to occur within a building, containing rooms, with desks, chalkboards, and some media technology. If place is to have any role in furthering pedagogical discussions research has to embrace what goes on outside as not peripheral to the act of teaching. Why then is place important to pedagogy? Following Di Leo and Jacobs (2004) directions, research must begin to consider all places for teaching as viewed by pedagogical theory (p. 10). Teaching outside immediately brings into question the human experience in place, and, central to this study, the pedagogical significance in outside teaching. Being in a place, even an outside place, lends itself to a quality of believing that may not be found indoors; there is the concrete that *this is* the place in question, and with that affirmation, a release of emotion and or understanding connected to human senses making the place more real. Becker (2004) claims the realness for some could be experienced as a powerful experience: "Ahh! This part of the world does exist" (p. 125). Becker claims that being in a place allows a person to experience the world through the flesh. This is the educational move from the abstract to the tangible—concept to palpable.

School is politically intended to induce people to become what the power-wielders desire: industrialized factory workers or developers of the knowledge economy. Thus inside schooling is important aculturalization to assist the social stability and continuation. Gallagher (1993) offers many insights into the power of place. Gallagher states that the Industrial Revolution was the historical event that called the West indoors (p. 13). As a people we turned away from one way of life to accept and embrace another way of existing that was disconnected from the natural world. According to Gallagher, we accepted a way of life that controlled our environment artificially. Gallagher warns the reader that as a human species we must accept that "the world around us affects our behavior, our thoughts, emotions; thus we need to begin to understand what a good environment is as it applies to community, the forest, the home, the office and even schools" (p. 19). To begin to understand the power of place is to take into consideration a Chinese form of geomancy: the feeling to a place, *feng shui* (Gallagher, p. 20). Westerners might better understand the place meaning as ambience and, for the purposes of my study, this would be a *distinctive atmosphere*. Gallagher states: "There are special things in the places all around us, but you may have to work hard to see them" (p. 23). To gain the experience of power associated with place educationally requires the teacher to lead students outside the school's inner environment. Gallagher (1993) explains the place sensation as our connection to a sense of presence; something perceived by the senses, but not validated by our senses, a sensation of something sacred (p. 24). What did the teachers in my study sense? Is there something sacred in being with students in an outside place? Is what teacher's sense closer to the feeling of a pedagogical relationship that includes the natural world as place in the relational? Could the power of place influence the teacher's pedagogical relationship with children? These questions are important to consider in how we relate to the children we teach. Gallagher posits that the "interior worlds we create, from log cabins to airplane cabins, have climates that affect our well-being as surely as the climates outside" (p. 47). Incumbent with the affects of place on the relational are insights of some obvious comparisons of institutional and natural places: lighting—day vs. night; temperature—hot vs. cold; visual surroundings—breath taking vs. bleakly stark; unique characteristics of terrain—wild places vs. urban places; populated places vs. non-populated places; extreme places vs. benign places; new and old places—excitement vs. comfort; world forces—explained vs. unexplained; sacred or taboo places vs. places of little or precious value; imaginary vs. real places; memorable places vs. places bound for discovery; places that stimulate vs. places that mollify; places that are public vs. private; isolated places of solitude vs. accessible places designed for the tourist; and places that provide a sense of belonging vs. places of disconnect. As humans we all have the ability to acclimatize, to adapt to the environment, but the power of a place can still affect us, including how we relate to others in that place. Considering Gallagher's insights, one should not take for granted indoor environments or outside places in how they could be impacting our relational capacity with children. Pedagogically, this is paramount because, as Gallagher indicates, a person is a place and our very fist place is the womb, confirming the significance of the teacher-parent relationship with children (p. 109).

At this point it would not be too far fetched to state that our first relationship to place is for our bodies to in fact mediate our immediate world. Cultural expectations then can mediate our response to the influences of place. And Gallagher (1993) positions: "When we enter [a] 'behavior settings'—a school, restaurant, gas station, hospital—

everything in that environment encourages us to maintain the status quo. In a sense we are no longer quirky individuals, but teachers and students, proprietors and customers, doctors and patients" (p. 128). Thus stepping outside would allow pedagogy to exist as a way of being between the teacher and students that would fall outside behavioral expectations of the institution. Pedagogy could be experienced as uniquely as the place that relationships find themselves in. Finally, Gallagher develops this line of inquiry by considering not just the place but *who* is in a particular space. The attraction or popularity of particular spaces vary greatly, even within a school, but common to many students is the cafeteria, and student centers as desirable, and classrooms as less attractive; but the most positive place among young adults was outside-park areas (p. 174). The teachers in this study would confirm this youth perspective.

Gallagher (1993) claims that the outdoors—nature—has the power to restore, heal, refresh, and energize, which contributes to a sense of achievement, greater ability, and self-confidence (pp. 209–211). Is this the outdoor influence on pedagogy? Is this the power of place on the outside teaching experience? Notion of place could be important when determining school locations. The need and benefit of going outside could be enhanced greatly in the appropriate locations to gain the outside advantage for teaching children. A location for buildings is not something that should be taken lightly. Swan (1991) informs us how the ancient Greeks selected location of the Delphi; the site place for this shrine building was based on *genus loci*—spirit of place. Pliny the Elder, a Greek naturalist, developed the practice of *geomancy*: "the right action for each place, present, and future" (Swan, p. 1). The practice of *geomancy* developed into the art and science of environmental planning and architecture. I wonder if this practice or environmental considerations are taken into account as important when school sites are decided on? There is tremendous pedagogical value to consider when considering places of learning for children. Piaget (1929) determined, from natural observations that with children and place, that there is a continuity of exchanges that allows the environment, natural or otherwise, to influence people's lives. Thus the role of environment on our learners, the child, is of great importance when teachers decide to lead students' outdoors. This study has revealed that the pedagogical relationship is unique in the outdoors, and the teachers have noted that the relationship to place emerges as a result of being out there with children. In short, the teachers in my study have revealed the need for more environmental awareness when engaged with children outdoors, for the pedagogical experience is significant and unique in an outdoor environment. It could be that in the act of teaching, teachers may have forgotten this attunement, due to repeated learning experiences that have been preformed over a number of years indoors. Why the disconnect from the outdoors? Why did teaching come to favor an inside place for engaging children?

Indoors As Abstraction For Outdoors

In part, this study aimed to begin a process for teachers to recover a forgotten sense of place. However, I must reiterate that central to this recovery would be to gain a more embodied understanding of pedagogy for outside teaching. Can modern education bridge an ancient practice of geomancy and allow the spirit of place to enrich existing pedagogical practices? In a sense, the teachers in my study have awakened me to a level of consciousness that requires me to see not just the tension of going outdoors in favor of inside practices, but to realize the significance of pedagogy as a result of being outdoors. For these teachers, going outside was a discovery of realizing the power of place, not as a tourist, or a leader of a pilgrimage, but as a pedagogue. And their anecdotes showed the significance of being outdoors with children, as compared to their expected inside lived experience in teaching; the outside-lived experience became an amplifier of pedagogy. I am curious whether modern education then has simply forgotten about the importance of being outside as an essential learning environment.

In response to the dominance of inside places over the importance of the land itself, Deloria (1971, 1991) insists that a building should have the potential to tell the occupant everything of value that is inherent within that society, and from the history of that building in society, resting on a particular piece of land, inform people of future possibilities. It is my belief that as schools, as modern buildings, came to dominate instruction, the quality of site selection, architectural considerations, and natural aesthetics forced people to retreat to an indoor instruction; there seemed no real purpose to go outdoors for learning. Pedagogically this is tragic because place is special to being human and this sense of *special* was evident in many of the teachers' anecdotes. How did teaching lose sight of the outdoor classroom as a site of pedagogical interaction?

The special aspect of the outside, as place is our need to relate to the outdoors as topophilia—our love of place, the outside, our natural world. In education, the disconnect from the outside world is because many teachers have come to rely on the safety of human-constructed worlds that have separated us from the outside. Understanding the disconnect from the outside for teaching is essential because the very school building projects an archetypical image of the place for pedagogy. The structured-inside place of school is a powerful symbol that represents what many of us expect about learning and teaching.

What do teachers and students learn about their world, their learning, and themselves every time they enter their school building? The dominance of school buildings for pedagogy can explain our need for schools as a means of structuring the world, giving teachers control to bring order and focus for learning and teaching. The importance here is the view that the outside world, from a western construct, has come to symbolize a demonic, inhospitable threatening place, where humans could prove their superior worth and fulfill cultural needs that natural places must be reclaimed, subdued, altered, cultivated, and controlled by human innovation. When teachers go outside, the simple change in learning engagement may allow people to exit their own egocentrism and connect, through vulnerability to other people, the environment, and the here and now. Simply put, nature—the outside world—is vast and for many not easily grasped or known. Thus outside could still be very mysterious and adverse to many despite our modern scientific-knowledge advancements.

For the teachers in my study the act of going outside was not to become one of cultural validation, visitation-tourism interests, deliberate confrontation, or conquering natural inhuman forces, but one of curious seeking, finding places for their students to learn best; pedagogically, a seeking of appropriate places for better learning opportunities, meeting the needs of their learners. The teachers claim there was a call beckoning them to go outside and their anecdotes show a pedagogical significance in being with children. Does the call of the outside transcend what the inside class experience can provide? Is the call more powerful then the dominate textbook, even those books full of graphics, and is the call to go outside to experience the world more compelling than what the Internet, or movies and TV, can offer as direct experiences?

And these questions bring back many past moments when I sat in my desk looking out-into-the world pondering the possibilities, and to the teachers in my study shared private thoughts, making public their lived experiences through anecdotes of leading children outdoors. The anecdotes themselves show us their lived experience in an outside world through text. Casey (2002) indicates that people are striving to understand identity by capturing and representing their place in the world. Like windows, landscape paintings are our reminder of an outside place, but the place itself is located within the security of the indoors (p. 3). And this is how learning is presented, securely indoors, represented or mediated through books and other forms of media. Casey informs us that the painting is more than a wall decoration, for the artist has captured a piece of the world through experienced perception as a surrogate of the artist's lived experience of the place.

Heidegger (1971) called this representation of place as an intense experience of bringing forth the world. Therefore, according to Casey (2002), the painting does not take the place of the world, rather stands in its place (p. 19). Is that not the role of the classroom? I know that when I stare into a painting I too, like the artist, can become absorbed and lost in that place, and I too can become absorbed, allowing me to feel apart of the place. Is that not the role of school? Students come to school, learn about their world, and with the involvement of the teacher gain a sense of place in the world. But to be in that place with the artist would be a very different experience, as it is to be in the world, outside the school, with students. The painting is an abstraction of a place, as is the textbook an abstraction of the world; being in a particular place with students for learning is real, full, concrete, connected, and tangible; as Burkholder (2003) calls a consilience—to see things in their wholeness (p. 26). Essentially that was my greatest learning from this study in understanding pedagogy for the outside teacher where the seeing the student was holistic.

Yet Casey (2002) points out a very obvious consideration to keep in mind regarding this study. A painting has boundaries, the frame. We can stare into a landscape painting and imagine unlimited possibilities, but in reality the frame keeps the view focused to what the artist wants you to see inside the frame (p. 122). Similarly, the classroom could do the same when prescribed curriculum becomes the backdrop for the teacher. However, going outdoors for teachers does not necessarily mean the teaching experience is more open to an endless space. For pedagogy keeps the teacher within appropriate bounds like a frame. But there is also the inside and outside of the frame, as the place itself and the representation of place. Derrida (1987) refers to this as a hybrid of inside and outside, a quasi-pace. Is an outside teaching a quasi-pedagogical experience? And is that hybrid of being outside, but still within the care of a teacher the uniqueness for the teachers in this study? I agree with Casey, the frame is just that, a frame and not the place itself. The frame can complement a painting or detract from the representation of the world, but no matter how the painting is experienced the frame is always present. Do we look upon the surface of a painting as teachers would upon the face of a child in their charge when outdoors?

Framing Places of Learning

A frame is a threshold, a boundary to an indeterminate place in the world, as is a doorway to the outside of the school. Abiding to Heidegger's (1962) view of space: to see the world is to see space as "split up into places" (p. 138). In understanding all these places as phenomena, human science research needs to include human accounts of lived experiences. As Merleau-Ponty (1962) expressed: people are "the absolute source" (p. ix). Jody, Jamie, Bobby, Leslie, Kelly, Jay, and Chris have shown their places of learning, through text, pedagogy, and the outside world of learning. The difference in their accounts is the concreteness of their lived experiences that balance the abundance of existing research on place education (e.g., Ellsworth, 2005; Callejo, Fain, & Slater, 2004) that remains program focused, student centered, argumentative, abstract, and theoretical (note the exception of Craig (2004), whose work I discuss below). Phenomenologically, I am better able to see and understand the outside teaching experience from the worldview of the teachers who participated in this study.

Craig's (2004) work on place education shows school as a parkland; she presents hopeful aspects for schooling in urban centers, where many teachers may find it difficult to seek outside places that are conducive for learning, providing for a sense of community for the children involved. In Craig's account of an outside experience the notion of needing to *watch over* (Aoki, 1989) included the children and the place, and for Craig the seeing was pedagogically protective. Craig uses the metaphor of landscape to show the class experience developing parkland adjacent their school for educative purposes. The metaphor was used to have the participants involved in that learning place discusses their experiences of space, place, and time (p. 123). Essential to Craig's work is the relational aspects that occurred in that particular learning place, and the view of landscape for the students was a revitalization of the learning experience. The place for learning allowed the teachers and students to create a new story of success, not one of scholastic failure that was historic because of inner-city poverty, racial esteem, and a sense of community hopelessness. Previous to the outside initiative the school was mired in struggle, frustration, and learning discontent. According to Craig, the outside place was the reason that provided for school salvation and genuine partnerships. Visiting the school now one is bound to be "captivated by the sights of learning … [and] confronted by the sounds of learning" (p. 135). In short, Craig confirms from the academic position on place-based learning that "spaces extend learning beyond the conventional four walls of classrooms and the generic box called 'school'" (p. 138).

School as place thus should not be considered lightly, from an architectural standpoint or from the naturalist call connecting students to nature. This study has not definitively answered all the questions that I posed at the beginning. The teachers, however, have shown me significant moments that allowed me to see pedagogy differently, and for myself as an outdoor educator, more honestly. Yet I am firm on one conclusion and that is the importance of place pedagogy that requires more study and understanding by teachers, school administrators, and students themselves. The places we learn in influence more than just the curricular outcomes; places shape who we are and how we relate to one another. I suppose if I ascribe to Basso (1996) I too am seeking wisdom that naturally comes from places in our world; according to Basso this is not a simple task, for a sense of place is a complex undertaking (as is understanding the subtleness and significance of pedagogy in the lives of teachers and children). However, I am still seeking wisdom for teaching that is pedagogically grounded.

Similar to Basso (1996), I am looking for good places, and I too will be wise enough to hang onto them as special sites of learning that will allow me to enter into the lives of children. Honestly, this dissertation has become ***a place in text*** where I can go to at any time, for the returning, rereading, and reinterpretations will present newer, and forgotten, layers of pedagogical meaning that I gained by collaborating with Jody, Jamie, Bobby, Leslie, Kelly, Jay, and Chris. These teachers have heard the same call as I, a call from the outside, obscured from my vision because of classroom walls–unclear, muted and hard to grasp in articulation, but I hear it, and I respond to the pull it has over me as a teacher and person, the call from outside beckons me to leave the inside world. Teachers and researchers of education must keep in mind that the outside world is older than anything we have built in our histories, and there is much to be gained and learned by going there. As well, there is still much to learn and discover about the quality of those outside learning experiences that will require further study. Going outside with children is not a simple act in teaching! Tuan (1977) questions how long it takes to know a place (p. 183) and I posit more importantly for teaching, outdoors or indoors, how long does it take to know a child in a place?

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Appendix A

Photograph Permission

From: Rob Rudeski [robrudeski@earthlink.net]
Sent: Tuesday, February 08, 2005 11:44 PM
To: Andrew Foran
Subject: RE: Photos

Hi Andrew,

Please feel free to use my photo in this dissertation. If you need a hi-res version for printing, let me know and I will send it to you.

Rob Rudeski

-----Original Message-----
From: Andrew Foran
Sent: Feb 8, 2005 12:58 PM
To: rob@rudeski.com
Subject: Photos

Dear Rob I am a professor finishing my dissertation and trying hard to find an image that captures the centrality of my issue. Your picture Outside looking in is beautiful and I am asking permission to be able to use this in my chapter 3. I will send this to you so you can understand the context. Thanking you in advance for taking time to consider my request. All the best

Andrew Foran
aforan@stfx.ca
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St. Francis Xavier University
Faculty of Education

This e-mail may be privileged and/or confidential, and the sender does not waive any related rights and obligations. Any distribution, use or copying of this e-mail or the information it contains by other than an intended recipient is unauthorized. If you received this e-mail in error, please advise me (by return e-mail or otherwise) immediately.

Appendix B

Sample Interview Questions

The following is an example of the reflective conversation that each teacher engaged in. The questions I asked in the phenomenological interview allowed me to create stories, based on concrete experiences, of teachers engaging children with the curriculum outside the school. A sample of typical questions that I prepared in advance of the first interviews is as follows. This was the essential structure that I used in conducting my phenomenological interview:

1. Describe the places outside the classroom that you use as the alternate class environment.
2. Can you think of a *high* moment of teaching outdoors? When? Where? What happened? What did you do? Tell it as you experienced it.
3. Can you think of a *low* moment of teaching outdoors? When? Where? What happened? What did you do? Tell it as you experienced it.
4. How do the children, and you, respond to teaching–learning in an outside environment? Did you have any interactions with one or more students that you would not have in the classroom? Can you give an example? When? Where? What happened? What did you do? Tell it as you experienced it.
5. Can you recall any other particular and vivid outside experience that is especially significant?
6. What makes that moment stand out?
7. Can you describe this specific moment?
8. What were you experiencing at that moment?

The purpose of the second interview was to provide the teachers involved in sharing their stories an opportunity to reinterpret their experiences outside the school. The second interview was my opportunity to probe deeper into concrete moments that were captured anecdotally by teachers. This informal reflection, by both the teacher and me as the researcher, provided a shaping of the experience, allowing the text to show the outside teaching experience. The interpretative interview allowed me to gain depth and insight into each data source.

1. Have you ever regretted not taking a class outdoors for a particular lesson? Can you give a specific example?
2. Have you ever regretted taking a class outdoors? Can you give a specific example?
3. Is there a difference in the planning you do for a lesson inside/outside?
4. How can you account for the differences or the similarities?
5. Describe your pedagogical relationship with students outside the school. Is the relationship redefined outdoors?
6. What are the benefits and limitations of an outdoor learning experience?
7. How do you perform outside the school? Is it the same as inside the classroom? Can you give a specific example?